

To The Readers Of Dissent:

It has now become a custom that every two years we turn to our readers, asking for financial help. But more than a custom, it is an absolute necessity.

The economics of a little magazine resemble the economics of an underdeveloped country. There is never enough capital to reach the "take-off point" that might lead to self-sufficiency. As soon as some progress is made, the "terms of trade" become unfavorable. For us, the "terms of trade" consist of rising printer's bills, mailing and administrative costs, etc. We run the most fanatically economical magazine in the country: our expenditure is smaller than the deficits of subsidized journals, neither editors nor writers get paid, and all the work is contributed by people who act out of idealistic commitment. When some of our writers submit an article, they are giving us the equivalent of several or more hundred dollars which they might get for it elsewhere.

These are facts—the kind known as hard facts.

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dollar bills. For there are not enough of us for that. We must have pledges in larger sums, in two and three figures.

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THE EDITORS

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A QUARTERLY OF
SOCIALIST OPINION

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Letters From Mississippi

The following reports from the Mississippi Summer Project were written as letters to their friends by two young volunteer workers, Paul and Geoffrey Cowan. Paul was working in Vicksburg, a semi-industrialized city on the Mississippi River, and Geoff was stationed in Batesville, the county seat of the rural Penola County. Their letters are printed here with permission.—EDITOR

“From Mississippi the rest of the United States seems unreal,” Bob Moses, director of the Mississippi Summer Project, remarked to a group of volunteers at our orientation session at Oxford, Ohio. At that time my own mental picture of the state contained nothing but an unending series of swamps, bayous, and dark, lonely roads. Of course the real Mississippi is nothing like that—but there was a certain logic behind my misconception. It had, quite simply, been impossible for me to believe that the skein of uncivilized atrocities that one knew had covered this state, could have spread through an area whose exterior is as modern and developed as the places one had left.

A white lady with whom I dined one night in Vicksburg uncovered this attitude of mine. “You Northerners all think that every Mississippian is a bare-footed redneck,” she complained. She and her husband had invited another summer volunteer and myself to their large, modern ranch-style home. We were eating steak, which had been cooked over a do-it-yourself barbecue pit, and drinking white wine. “Some of us are different than that.”

All night she had been calm and charming but now, as she talked, one could sense a change: her eyes became teary and her voice wavered. Her feelings were not hard for me to understand. As a COFO worker, my character and background had been subjected to similar distortions here in Mississippi. My hostess was no closer to the Erskin Caldwell characters I had expected to find dominating this state than I was to the immoral, unwashed Communist dupe who, rumour here once had it, would persuade all Negro cooks to poison their employers’ food.

continued on page 441

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

On the approaching elections, as on other issues, DISSENT does not seek to present an editorial consensus. Each of us, like all our contributors, speaks for himself. The article by Irving Howe, though several editors agree with its general outlook, represents a personal opinion. So too does the somewhat different interpretation offered by H. Brand. And the political notes by Arthur Waskow, well-known as a writer on disarmament and allied topics, are a contribution we are pleased to print. We hope the issues raised in these pieces will stimulate readers to submit their own views.—EDITORS

Irving Howe

The Goldwater Movement

Simply by winning the Republican nomination, Senator Goldwater has left a strong imprint on American politics.

Everything now shifts in his direction. The apparatus of a major party lies in the grip of his friends: nor will they easily be dislodged from it. To a notable extent the terms of public debate will be determined not by the authentic and pressing needs of the country, but by the ideological fantasies of the right wing. And the most committed and fervent political activity may be expected to come from Goldwater partisans who now can finally feel they have a cause of their own.

This last seems to me especially im-

portant. There is a new political energy surging up in this country, it is an energy of hard-bitten resentment, and it is driven by intensity of purpose at the very moment that almost all other political tendencies have become sated, slack or feeble. Unless Goldwater is utterly routed in the election, his movement—for it is a movement, not merely a candidacy—will survive as a powerful force. It will set itself up as the primary opposition to the Johnson regime, creating a constant pressure from the right, and providing for many Americans an ideological lure in which the imagery of nostalgia nestles against vicarious brinkmanship.

Whatever else, it ought by now to be

clear how inadequate was the official liberalism of the last few decades. Both the Negro movement, on the one hand, and the new right wing, on the other, refuse to settle into the mild assumptions of a political equilibrium, that moderate balance in which "countervailing powers" are supposed to play off one against the other, reconcilable in their opposition. At times our society may approach this kind of equilibrium, and for certain kinds of short-range analyses, like those of Samuel Lubell, it may be useful to employ such a "model." But the realities of our social life are too rough and intractable for the politics of equilibrium to be able to contain them indefinitely. Rapid technological change, gnawing economic inequalities, a profound moral malaise, the growing discrepancy between a politics geared to diffusion and an economy requiring discipline—these are a few such realities. And they are bound to create, as they already have created, new and desperate conflicts of interest and idea. The intellectual guardians of the Goldwater movement, it is worth noting, seem not to have heard about "the end of ideology": perhaps they read the wrong magazines.

A "law" might here be advanced about recent American politics: the more housebroken the left, the more adventuresome the right. When there is not enough pressure from the liberal-labor movements upon both government and society, the right wing feels free to risk its own political course, breaking off from the moderate center to which it has usually been semi-attached. For it can then calculate that even in electoral defeat it will gain power, becoming the domi-

nant pressure upon an administration that lacks firm principles of its own.

I would venture the speculation that what crucially enabled the Goldwater movement to enter its "take-off" phase was the failure of the labor and liberal communities to cement a sufficiently strong alliance with the rising Negro movement. Once the right wing saw that the Negroes would more or less have to go it alone; once it became clear that a large fraction of even enlightened white sentiment consisted of passive sympathy, not active solidarity; once, in brief, there was no great danger that if the right wing detached itself from the political center, a resurgent Negro-labor-liberal alliance would pour into the resulting power vacuum—then the Goldwater movement was able to set out on its present course.

And a second "law": In the politics we now have in the United States, the kind and quantity of the pressure put upon the center largely determines where and what the center will be. *The Wall Street Journal* (July 14, 1964) has noted as much:

With American political thought thus polarized between Johnson and Goldwater, the conclusion seems almost inescapable that the center of political gravity must now move rather sharply to the right. By hauling the Republican party rightward . . . Goldwater may actually have achieved some part of his dream of turning the country towards a significantly more conservative choice . . .

If Goldwater chooses to regard the Eastern financiers as his enemy, bent on control of the GOP for narrow, self-serving aims, Johnson is just as ready to hail them as new-found friends.

No foreseeable society seems likely to be so finely adjusted to the conflicting needs of its population as to preclude serious conflict and discontent. In regard to the United States today, such an expectation is sheer wishful fantasy. Conflict is inescapable, and the only question is what forms it will take and what value it will have. The tragedy of the moment is that it has been the Goldwater movement which has taken upon itself—with comic inappropriateness, but also frightening earnestness—the role of crusader. In its vocabulary, and at least part of its intent, this movement is not satisfied with a mild defense or a mild improvement of the bureaucratic and militarized welfare state. The right wing has also done something which, thus far, no other political movement in America has managed to do: it has stirred thousands of middle class people to leave their ranch houses and enter the hustle of politics. It has made them into political activists who learn the art of attending meetings and the craft of out-sitting and out-voting their more conventional opponents. It has fired them with the passions of a cause which, in the style of many demagogic movements, brings together the rhetoric of national interest with the urgencies of social selfishness. What a comedy that the notion of “a mass society” in which men flounder in apolitical passivity should be shattered by these crusaders from the barbecue-pits!

II

The Goldwater movement is not yet fully formed: there are conflicting interests at work within it and, especially if it suffers a humiliating defeat,

there will be plenty of splits and transformations. Right now it seems to consist of a loose coalition between a hard reactionary core, providing muscle, ideology and money, and a larger scatter of traditional conservatives, providing votes, emotion and precinct committees. It is easy enough to point out the contradictions in the Goldwater platform: e.g., the promise to cut federal spending and decrease the power of national government coupled with the intent to build up still further the armed forces toward possible adventure abroad. Such contradictions are real enough, and no doubt there are a good many Goldwater partisans who manage, through the magic of sheer desire, to reconcile these perspectives in their minds. But in the long run—and in the unlikely case of electoral victory, the short run—there can be no reconciling nostalgia for *laisse-faire* with lust for world domination.

Certain political commentators have been inclined to treat the Goldwater movement primarily as an emotional reflex, a revulsion from the complexities of the twentieth century. James Reston writes, for example:

The more complicated life becomes, the more people are attracted to simple solutions; the more irrational the world seems, the more they long for rational answers; and the more diverse everything is, the more they want it all reduced to identity.

Those who feel this way are undoubtedly attracted to Senator Goldwater, and many part-political and part-ethical movements have gone further on less. (*NY Times*, July 21, 1964.)

Probably true, as far as it goes. A good part of the feeling behind the

Goldwater movement does stem from a nostalgia for the days when Negroes knew their place, cities had not swamped the landscape, income taxes were not so oppressive, and little countries crossing the U.S. could be handled with gunboats. Part of the feeling behind the Goldwater movement also rests upon a sense of national frustration: if the U.S. is indeed as rich, powerful and good as it keeps telling itself, why then do so many countries disobey it? and why, as we edge toward omnipotence, can we not simply eradicate Communism with one swoop of our strength?*

There is more to be said than this kind of impressionistic sociology allows. For what matters is not merely the inferred *motives* of the Goldwater supporters, but the visible *meaning* of the Goldwater movement. And here the kind of assuaging sentimentalism practiced by Reston and other moderate liberals is very annoying. For it is outrageous to be told again and

* One trouble with this kind of motive-probing is that it explains either too much or too little. Michael Walzer, writing from England, has a pertinent comment: "the theory of *ressentiment* has got to be stretched beyond breaking point if it is going to include the frustrated, bankrupt embittered types who voted for Hitler; the frightened, losing-status types who, we thought, supported McCarthy; and the triumphantly egotistical, prosperous types who seem to be behind Goldwater. Barry's men, or at least some of them, are even modern and urban: how are they to be accounted for by theories which have always emphasized that right-wing politics was the anxious response of pre-modern men to the cosmopolitan and contemporary world? Dallas may be a barbarous place, but it is absolutely up-to-date barbarism. Maybe, in his own way, Goldwater has something when he talks of moral malaise."

that Goldwater is sincere, nice and good. I do not believe it. The man who voted against the Civil Rights Act is not a good man. The man who said that "because Joe McCarthy lived, we are a freer, safer and more alert nation," is not a good man. The man who in his speech at the Republican convention stirred the bestialities of racism by his innuendoes about "bullies and marauders" in the streets is not a good man. And neither is the man who, when "asked by a European reporter to comment on his policies toward Europe and Germany," replied: "I think that Germany originated the modern concept of peace through strength." (*N.Y. Times*, August 13, 1964.)

Muddled nostalgia, homestead economics, day-dream brinkmanship all enter the Goldwater complex. But there is also a hard ideology, a precise focus of interest, and no one should have any trouble in identifying these: they animate a politics of reaction. This politics rests in part on the social selfishness of large segments among the upper middle class which consciously disdain the sentiments of "welfarism" and are prepared to let the poor and the ethnic minorities stew in silence or, if noisy, be slugged into submission. This politics rests on the desire of powerful men—Ralph Cordiner is not a mid-Western automobile salesman, George Humphrey not a malaise-smitten petty bourgeois, H. L. Hunt not a bewildered storekeeper—to call a halt to social reform and then slowly to push it back. And it is a politics that rests on the dirty halfwinks of racism, called euphemistically "the Southern strategy."

No matter what anyone says or does, the racial question looms large in the

election, and this because the Goldwater movement has chosen, with venom aforethought, to make it so. By now Goldwater need merely insert a phrase here and there in his speeches about "marauders in the street" and everyone will understand that he is speaking not about unmolested murderers in Mississippi but desperate juveniles in Harlem. And he need not even do that, for he has made himself sufficiently plain: every white-superiority punk in the country has gotten the message.

(Judging by his initial campaign speeches, Goldwater intends openly to capitalize on the "white backlash." Speaking on September 3 in Arizona, he painted himself as a gallant defender of white womanhood:

Our daughters, our wives, all you women, feel unsafe on our streets today. . . .

Chose the way of this present Administration, and you have the way of mobs in the street, restrained only by the plea that they wait until after the election to ignite violence again.

This is filth: a blatant appeal to the most primitive racial phobias and prejudices. That this man speaks in the name of morality, and that soft-headed liberal commentators tell us he is, despite his intellectual confusion, a nice man, I find nauseating.)

To insist that there is a firm reactionary intent behind the Goldwater movement is not, of course, to claim that the major centers of American big business are supporting it. Nor is it to assert that the Goldwater movement is at present fascist or neofascist. A segment of the business class is supporting Goldwater, and while not the crucial segment, it is, in terms of re-

sources and perhaps even numbers, big enough. (No right-wing movement ever *begins* with the full support of big business.) And as for fascism, obviously the Goldwater movement, like all of our native right-wing movements, diverges crucially from the patterns of European fascism. But political phenomena must be seen not merely in their momentary appearance, but also in their potential. In and around the Goldwater movement there reside the cadres of a fascist group; in its "culture" of social meanness, racist hostility and chauvinist mania they find sustenance. At the moment there is no serious possibility of an American fascism on a mass scale; but given either a depression or a group of major defeats in the Cold War, a minority segment of the Goldwater movement could well transform itself into pin-striped fascists. That this potential simmers in American society is significant enough.

III

There is a variety of sophisticated analysis, found among both left and right-wing commentators, which denies that a Goldwater victory would importantly change the shape and direction of American society. This curious determinism is expressed, among others, by the *Wall Street Journal* (July 15, 1964): "Goldwater as President Would Move Cautiously in Changing U.S. Policy. He Wouldn't Try to Dismantle Welfare State, But would Bar Many New Programs." And the article goes on to say:

A Goldwater administration might end being noted by historians more for maintaining the status quo than for turning it upside down. His more frantic fans anticipate and his

foes forecast something like a revolution of the right—but not Barry. A single term of Goldwater conservatism might have surprisingly little lasting reverse thrust upon domestic affairs; it would dismantle not much of the welfare state which this candidate despises; it would not turn the bulk of Government back to the states; it would assuredly not smash the labor unions; it would not pare Federal spending to fit into a peanut bag; it would not abolish the graduated income tax, scuttle Social Security or sell off TVA. . . .

Two full terms might yield an enduring influence upon the body politic, nevertheless, not by surgery so much as *through holding long enough to a lean diet.* (Emphasis added.)

Let us, for the sake of argument, accept this analysis. It still does not dispose of, nor even begin to consider, the primary question: what effect would a Goldwater victory have on the disposition of social and political forces in the country? *Whom would it encourage to greater boldness, whom discourage?*

That Goldwater would not try to dismantle social security may well be true; in fact, I am sure it is. But at a time when problems have a way of "suddenly" breaking out with intense violence ("suddenly," because there has been a studied failure to cope with them in advance), a decision not to push ahead with change and reform is equivalent to social retreat. To do little or nothing about automation may not threaten the continued existence of the welfare state, such as it is; but it would radically change the content of that welfare state. To do little or nothing in behalf of the Negroes would not remove the Civil Rights Act from

the books; but it would allow the conditions that breed Negro despair to fester. Standing still can be a form of retrogression; "holding long enough to a lean diet," a mode of starvation.

Consider the racial question. How would the Negro community respond to a Goldwater victory? Without any doubt, as a decision by the white majority to halt and perhaps turn back the Negro revolution. There would follow in the Negro community a widespread demoralization, the mushrooming of a bitter and apocalyptic chauvinism, and the discrediting of the serious Civil Rights organizations. Malcolm X, or someone like him, demagogically inflaming the entirely justified dismay of the Negroes would become a dominant spokesman; and the notion that Negroes have nothing to hope for through an alliance with any segment of white society would be accepted even more than it already has been. Is that a prospect to be faced with equanimity?

Consider foreign policy. It is probable that power would have a chastening effect upon Goldwater, probable that he would not start by "unleashing" Chiang Kai-shek or invading Cuba or even promoting a full-scale war in southeast Asia (though the order of probability decreases with each of these examples). Yet I think it would be politically foolish and humanly insensitive to ignore the widespread feeling that with *this* man at the button we would have grave reason to sleep even less well than we have in the past. Kennedy before Cuba was troubling, Johnson retaliating in the Gulf of Tinkin equally so; but would anyone maintain that in such situations, where nations tremble at the edge of war and

the immediate fateful decision does lie in the hands of very few people, it would not be heart-chilling to have to depend on the judgment of Goldwater and his cronies?

No, it is neither political sophistication nor common sense to suggest that a Goldwater administration would result in little more than a somewhat conservatized stewardship of the welfare state. This is a kind of fatalist historicism which anyone intensely concerned with the realities of American society ought to avoid. In terms of political relationships, social dynamics and the temper of public life, a Goldwater victory would have enormous and disastrous consequences.

IV

And Johnson? His low-grade sediment of the not-very-liberal New Frontier leaves not much reason for enthusiasm. All the criticisms of the Johnson Administration offered by H. Brand on an adjacent page seem to me correct and pertinent; it is essential to keep repeating them; and plenty more could be added. At least some of the charges Goldwater will bring against Johnson are true. When Goldwater says that the Administration's "anti-poverty program" is mostly political publicity, he is telling the truth. When Goldwater says that Johnson's conversion to civil rights is belated, as a scrutiny of Congressional voting demonstrates, he is again telling the truth. Even if from the mouth of the devil, the truth is the truth.

The Johnson Administration, partly in accordance with the self-image cherished by the President and praised by his admirers as the very summit of political astuteness, has set for itself

a consciously "centrist" course. Here is its election strategy as summed up, sympathetically, by Roscoe Drummond in the *Herald Tribune* (August 26, 1964):

- 1) Be gentle with the South. Placate the Southern Democratic leaders and Southern voters just as far as possible.
- 2) Concentrate hard on winning the votes of Republican moderates the way Gen. Eisenhower concentrated on winning the votes of Democratic moderates.
- 3) Count on Sen. Goldwater to alienate the labor and liberal vote so totally that none of the populous, industrial states will be jeopardized by Mr. Johnson's "moderation."

Drummond continues:

What the Johnson platform—and strategy—seek is to appeal to everybody but the Far Right and the Far Left, which is what the Republicans have done until last month. As Mr. Goldwater has moved the Republican Party from Right Center to Far Right, *Mr. Johnson is moving the Democratic Party from Left Center to Center* (emphasis added).

An opportunist in the root sense of the term, Johnson is remarkably sensitive to the cross-workings of social pressures: he consciously balances off left and right, while preempting for himself the wide middle. To undercut Goldwater in conspicuous patriotism and as part of an increasingly "firm" foreign policy, he launches the Gulf of Tonkin attack. To intensify the support of the liberal-labor world he chooses Hubert Humphrey for the Vice-Presidency, surely the best of the available possibilities—yet makes certain that Humphrey first publicly reassures the "business community" that he is no longer quite the liberal

he once was. And while reconciling to his campaign a good part of the Southern Democrats, he also agrees to having seated at the Democratic convention the Freedom Democrats of Mississippi.

What matters here is not so much Johnson's personal opportunism as the possibility it offers for certain limited advances in American politics. For all practical purposes, the overwhelming bulk of the liberal-labor-Negro forces will exert their political pressure *within* the Democratic party during the next period. Leaving aside the far right, most of the significant politics in this country will be fought out within the loose confines of the Democratic party. Like it or not, we must recognize this as a fact—and try to seize whatever opportunities it offers. Thus, when the Freedom Democrats from Mississippi win a notable moral-political victory at the Democratic convention, it is foolish merely to stress the incompleteness of that victory or to dismiss it as a mere placatory maneuver on the part of the Establishment. What matters is not the motives of Johnson or anyone else, but the fact that Aaron Henry was seated and Bull Connor walked out. This represents a significant intervention in political life by a section of the population that had previously been mute and powerless. Such intervention should be encouraged and magnified; it is the major immediate hope for American politics.

To say all this is not to suggest that a victorious Johnson Administration left to its own devices would undertake the radical measures necessary even to begin working out solutions for such problems as automation, unemploy-

ment, racial discrimination, etc. But note the qualifying phrase: the Johnson Administration *left to its own devices*. A smashing defeat of the Goldwater movement would offer the labor and liberal forces, as also the Negroes, a major opportunity to come forward and press for those social and economic measures which will be desperately needed in the next five years. Whether such an opportunity will be seized, is another question. But the fact that it could not exist in case of a Goldwater victory and would in case of a Johnson victory, is the key.

There has appeared in a recent *New Leader* (August 17, 1964) an article by the ADA National Chairman, John Roche, in which he tries to show that Kennedy's New Frontier, despite its paltry legislative record, achieved something of great value: it reopened, says Roche, the possibility of public discussion. It brought to the forefront such problems as poverty, Negro rights, etc. Roche exaggerates, in the way most Kennedy admirers do, but there is an important strain of truth in what he says. For what did happen during the Kennedy years was not so much an unfreezing of the legislative process as an unfreezing of intellectual life: it was no longer assumed that we had reached a stasis of glory; inquiry and restlessness began to matter; people began to think and talk.

We democratic socialists, precisely because we believe in fundamental socio-economic change, want that process to continue and go deeper. We have nothing in common with those who yearn for catastrophe and apocalypse, for we know who, in such an event, would be the first victims. Our hope lies in stretching the limits of the wel-

fare state, in continued free discussion that permits us to raise the need for transcending those limits, in an atmosphere of democratic self-confidence and participation. At the present moment, the idea of socialism is unfortunately not a central issue in American politics; but the idea of a new wave of social reforms is. No mere electoral result can guarantee such reforms. Nevertheless I propose to vote

for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket because its victory would at least give us the chance to make them possible. What is needed now is an *overwhelming* defeat of the Goldwater movement, so that it will be dispatched from the forefront of American political life and a renewed Negro-labor-liberal alliance can press forward once again in behalf of the true needs of our society.

Arthur I. Waskow

Politics, U.S.A.—1964

1. At least one-third of the country seems fully prepared to vote for a right-wing candidate for President (30%-40% of Northern Democrats were for Wallace; 30-60% of Northern Republicans for Goldwater; maybe 60% of Southern whites for him). These people are frustrated, fed-up, and fearful—in part—of the new society into which we are moving, but much more so of *the fact that we are moving but have not yet arrived*: the fact that we stand on the threshold of major changes, need to make them, but have not yet done so. They might *like* to keep the Negroes, the Russians, the poor “in their place”; they might *like* not to have racial integration, disarmament, leisure and education for the working class and income for the unemployed. But most of them could probably live in such a world once they got into it. It is the strain of moving they can hardly stand; the pressures of racial conflict, the un-

easy detente, the talk about Triple Revolutions. A hard core of these people may be principled as well as emotional right-wingers, who will loathe the new society even after it has arrived; but most of them are terrified by the transition.

2. Insofar as they are terrified, these people might well be willing to follow the principled right-wingers. Their terror might be mobilized behind a home-grown American equivalent of fascism: that is, a repression of the Negroes, a holy Cold War against Communism and perhaps a hot war against China and Cuba, sopping up unemployment with arms-race spending, etc.

3. So long as the money and legitimacy of the Establishment is denied these people, however, they probably can do no better than getting a third of the Presidential vote—and outside the South, so few Congressional seats that they can carry no real power in

the Federal government. (We will return to the kind of "outside" power—in-the-streets power—they might have.)

4. If Point 3 is correct, a crucial question is whether they get Establishment support. Concretely this means whether Goldwater can hold the Republican Establishment inside the party. In short, a crucial issue is whether the Republican party is or is not breaking up, for good.

5. One possible interpretation of recent events is that the Republican Establishment had already (beginning with the bipartisan tradition, continuing with Kennedy's "coalition" Cabinet, and being fulfilled in Johnson's appeal to their more folksy elements and their budget-balancing ideology) mentally migrated to the Democrats and were therefore emotionally and otherwise unable to resist the Goldwater takeover of the Republican party. In this case, the Republican party will break up for good, and Goldwater will be unable to win more than a third of the votes.

6. If the interpretation set forth in Point 5 is incorrect, one can hardly explain the Easterners' fiasco except in terms of utter irresponsibility: they may just have been too unsure of themselves and their goals to have mobilized an effective "modern Republican" campaign. (Certainly this latter seems to describe Eisenhower.) If *this* interpretation is correct, one could expect large parts of the Republican Establishment to support Goldwater regardless of his program, etc. If that happens, Goldwater might get far more than one-third of the votes. In case of a racial explosion or a major

international disaster, he might even win.

7. My own estimate is that the Republican Party is splitting. In the past, the party could be described as a continuously renewed deal between little business and Eastern Established big business. The Establishment sold an anti-government ideology to the little businessmen in such a way as to protect the Eastern businessmen's private government from interference by Washington. The little businessmen bought the anti-government ideology in order to make sense and indignation, instead of despair, out of their own helplessness in the complexity of mid-century metropolitan society; and then they sold the ideology back to the Establishment for use as a rationalization and self-justification of the Establishment's insistence on private government. But now both sides in this arrangement are moving in their own separate directions: the Establishment is increasingly unable to pay even lip service to this rhetoric because it is so closely tied to the government, while the little businessmen have been oversold on the anti-government ideology and are taking it so seriously that most of the Establishment has gotten frightened and wants to switch over to the Democrats, in order to manage Washington in another fashion. In short, my estimate is that much of the Establishment has become nationally more "responsible" than ever before and is acting irresponsible only vis-a-vis the Republican party.

8. If this is correct, we can look toward a peculiar period in which effective American politics takes place with-

in the Democratic Party. It should be noted that insurgent groups—the Negroes, the peace movement, possibly the unemployed—may well be uncomfortable with a “bipartisanized” Democratic party. They may try to break out of it, but will be fearful of doing so, as long as one-third of the country remains organized behind right-wingers in the revamped Republican party.

9. If the 1964 election ratifies the condition postulated in Points 5 and 6—that is, the emergence of a fairly cohesive but permanently small right-wing Republican party and of a “bipartisan” Democratic party with a probable permanent majority—then almost everything might depend on the President. He would have a huge majority in Congress, because of the defeat of Eastern Republicans running on a Goldwater ticket—a majority huge enough to expel some of the furthest right-wing Southern “Democrats” from the Democratic caucuses, pass a great deal of New Frontier legislation, move quickly toward full employment, reasonably painless racial integration powerfully enforced, major steps in arms reduction and detente, etc. *If he wanted to.* He could also continue the politics of temporizing, moving before the immediate pressures, etc.

10. In the long run (and probably even in the fairly short run) a policy of major forward movement would probably end the “on the threshold” frustration that produces such widespread support for right-wing ideology. If jobs were provided, street violence in the cities would drop, fears of Negro competition for scarce jobs would diminish, etc.; if integration moved

ahead quickly, suburbanites would soon learn that property values did not drop; if sizable disarmament took place, the country would discover we were not naked to attack. Thus the newly right-wing Republican Party would evaporate, and the Democratic Party would probably split up. (Perhaps between those who would want to stabilize the situation at full employment and moderate deterrence versus those who want total disarmament and income-without-jobs? Or on personal and organizational lines, e.g., between Humphrey and Robert Kennedy? Or some other, presently unexpected lines?)

11. On the other hand, a “centrist” policy of no forward movement, no action to anger the Establishment or anyone else, nor even to reconstruct the Establishment with labor and the Big Six Negro organizations more fully accepted in it—such a policy would leave American society still “on the threshold,” and at least a third of our people still frustrated and terrified. In that case, one can imagine widespread on-the-streets harassment of liberals (as in California, with night telephone calls and bomb threats, or in Mississippi, with night-riders, or in New York City with long-term white school boycotts). Perhaps there would be a major increase in right-wing strength by 1968.

12. But note the choice between forward movement and centrism will probably depend chiefly on the President, and this raises two questions: (A) Is he serious about moving into “The Great Society,” or is this part of the rhetoric necessary to include liberals who are suspicious of his past,

and fear he is still at heart the Senate Leader who wants to coopt everyone, please left and right and center, and move nowhere? (B) Is there any way of pushing toward "The Great Society" regardless of the President, or of continuing to push him toward it regardless of what he is "at heart"? In short, would the emergence of a dangerous rightwing Republican party paralyze liberals and insurgents, or is there some way for them to continue pushing or pulling the President as they have in effect done, through their mere existence and former suspicion of him, since the assassination?

13. Concerning the first question: there is unfortunate evidence from the President's career in Texas (see Ronnie Dugger in a recent issue of *The Progressive*) that he might try first to coopt, then to control, finally to castrate the liberals and insurgents. He *may* be different as President; he *may* see the higher way of pleasing every group is not to throw each a bone out of the present pot but to transform the pot by building the Great Society. But there is reason from experience for liberals and insurgents to "trust" him to do so; and the way in which he forced Humphrey to be chief hatchetman of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the National Convention, in order to prevent a Southern walkout while neutralizing the liberals, suggests a pattern for the future. In any case democracies do not survive as democracies by "trusting" Presidents. The second question is therefore crucial.

14. And this means that we must address the question of what liberals and insurgents should be doing now to try to bring about movement toward

the Great Society. What kinds of pressures would be available if Johnson wins with 60% or 65% of the vote and carries 50 more Democrats into the House and 4 more into the Senate? What kind of pressures would be available if Johnson wins only 53% or so, and has about the same Congress as he does now, While Goldwater establishes effective control of the Republican Party via alliances between a good part of the Republican Establishment and the "frustrated" vote?

15. The most important possible pressure, certainly if there is a big Democratic victory and probably in either case, would be vigorous concerted action in the Democratic primaries of 1966 and 1968 to defeat "moderate," conservative, or machine Democrats and to nominate instead principled and able liberals, militant Negroes, peace candidates who can pull part of the old Republican vote, etc., for the House and Senate. This requires local coalitions of labor, civil rights, "senior citizens," peace, and unemployed groups and organizations, with help from a similar national coalition and a program built around the large-scale reconversion of military effort into ending poverty.

16. The other major lever is an expansion and deepening of the politics of "creative disorder" in the streets. There would be two crucial questions, here: First, what pressures can be mobilized among urban ghetto Negro youth that would be seen by most Northern whites as legitimate, even if militant, and would energize white allies rather than stimulating rightwing organization as the recent riots have done? Secondly, can poor and un-

employed whites organize nonviolent street action similar to that of the Negroes—or will they find organization impossible in the absence both of any “middle-class poor” analogous to the middle-class Negroes, and of vigorous support from the labor movement?

17. Finally, what if some major earthquake results in Goldwater’s winning? Would there be time between November and January to plan for resistance to a major turn toward the right? Or would it be hopeless?

H. Brand

Why Vote for Johnson?

The Goldwater nomination marks a new departure in American politics. For the first time, a Presidential candidate lends focus to the conservative and reactionary forces in both parties. Goldwater is basically the candidate of the well-connected bureaucrat of the Mitchell-Newburgh type—a type that defends the interests of the small and medium-sized businessmen and of corporate executives on the make. Southern white citizens councils and the nouveau riche who owe their wealth principally to tax and regulatory policies and defense contracts readily identify with this type. Together, they form Goldwater’s narrow if tightly organized power base.

However, while Goldwater is their candidate, he cannot be their President. Once in the White House, he would be compelled to broaden his base. His upstate regulars, Southern Democrats, and reactionary Democratic machines—such as the one in his home state—will not suffice for him to govern. He would need the support of at least some “liberals,” such as Scranton. He would require the confidence of in-

dustry and Wall Street, and he would gain it since he would not likely attempt to dismantle any of the regulatory and protective institutions created during the New Deal, nor do more than modify the economic and fiscal policies which have safeguarded and often engendered high levels of business, though with declining effectiveness. Social stability would be as much the concern of a Goldwater administration as of its predecessors’. Whatever Goldwater and his lieutenants say now, they will not, if elected, want to precipitate a polarization of political forces in the U.S. He and his crew may be distasteful to all with humanist concerns, but they should not be regarded as fascist adventurers.

It should not be forgotten that conservatives have in the past seen very well the need for social “advancement.” Key social legislation has been originated by, or could not have been passed without, the support of such men as Dirksen (civil rights), Taft (housing and urban renewal), and Mills (social security). Such measures have not eradicated existing evils, nor

were they meant to. Rather, they have helped to forestall extreme social unbalance. Goldwater would have to act in the same sense, e.g., as Eisenhower did in preventing the 1958 recession from spiralling downward.

The bankruptcy of the right will stand revealed if Goldwater wins office, although the failure of welfare-state liberalism would then be not less manifest. Goldwater would not be able to do anything flagrantly reactionary; yet, neither would he be willing to deal with, or even to understand, the mounting problems of social disintegration—here as well as abroad—arising from the blind impact of technology coupled with the growing disparity in the distribution of wealth.

Any attempt by Goldwater to carry out his crackpot ideas in foreign policy would lead not to war as much as it would accelerate the deterioration in America's world position, and deepen the social decay in the developing countries while at the same time making totalitarian measures to cope with their problems more likely. While resisting innovation along a path of progressive orientation, Goldwater would not be able to revert to the Truman-Acheson-Dulles line, which was based on the assumption of unchallengeable U.S. arms superiority.

Does it matter then whether Goldwater wins the election or Johnson? This is the wrong question to ask. The right question is whether a re-elected Johnson administration will be able or willing to promote change in the lineup of social forces that have catapulted Goldwater and his like into the leadership of a national party.

There is nothing in the record of the Johnson or Kennedy administrations to allow of an affirmative answer. On the contrary, in key areas there exist no issues of substance between the Presidential candidates. The economic policies of the New Frontier have been essentially business-oriented (as is ably argued by Bernard D. Noszter in *The Mythmakers*). They have been designed to forestall any serious measure of controversy between the Democratic administration and business. Tax policy has favored the big corporations and the wealthy. The Federal budget has not been allowed to rise except for purposes of financing defense and the space effort. Welfare outlays have been kept virtually level; President Kennedy's chief budget officer publicly voiced pride at this fact. President Johnson has boasted repeatedly of his efforts to reduce the budgetary deficit, despite persistent heavy unemployment and underemployment.

The current business expansion has in large part been based on defense expenditures: In rebutting Goldwater's charges of inadequate preparedness, Johnson stressed that such spending had risen by \$28 billion since the Democrats took office in 1961. Throughout the postwar period, the wealth of the wealthy has vastly increased, but social problems have kept getting worse. One-fifth to one-third of the American people continue to live in substandard conditions. The threat of automation hangs over large numbers of workers, blue-collar and white-collar, white and non-white. Ever greater sections of American cities are becoming derelict. Decisive measures to deal with rapidly increasing State and local fiscal difficulties—which are

a major factor in the widespread conservatism of the electorate—have been almost totally lacking. Like a moloch, the Federal defense-space establishment devours a vast amount of the public revenue. “Growth,” is being relied on to facilitate the “trickling down” of wealth, i.e., to create jobs and raise revenues below the Federal level. But this carries an ever heavier price: A profit-based, government-aided expansion intensifies the contradictions in the allocation of resources and human labor.

Ideals of justice and democracy are regarded cynically; pessimism and lack of perspective mark public discussion; private concerns over careers and living standards are uppermost. A rampant commercialism, key prop of the economic expansion and of corporate power, spreads a false consciousness, and heightens the frustrations of job and urban life, which in turn go far to generate the mass basis of rightist movements.

And need much be said about the extent of substantive agreement between Johnson and Goldwater regarding foreign policy? True, the danger of a third world war might be enhanced by a President Goldwater, but so it was by Kennedy when, to close a “missile gap” he either knew or could have known didn’t exist, he raised the military budget upon taking office by many billions of dollars (see the still highly relevant article by P. M. S. Blackett, “Steps Towards Disarmament,” *Scientific American*, April 1962). Kennedy did not shirk an even greater risk when he took the U.S. to the brink over Cuba, a risk which his own aggressive policy with respect to Cuba had led to. And the war in Vietnam,

stepped up by Kennedy, has been intensified by Johnson.

Foreign aid has been cut back sharply, especially under Johnson. The Alliance for Progress, in itself not an unimaginative idea although puny in magnitude, ineffectual in method, and condemned to political sterility, is withering away in the administrative embrace of Johnson’s Mann and other Old Mexico hands. If Goldwater wants more of the same, it doesn’t make for differences worth arguing about.

So where are we?

To be sure, comparisons with the Weimar Republic and its fate are not very instructive. Goldwater is not a Hitler, Dirksen not a Hindenberg. Both want a firmer rule by the upper classes, by its older, increasingly disadvantaged sectors, and a stop to costly concessions to the urban masses, which erode the power of the conservatives and their institutions. However, both men are beholden to the political system that made possible their rise and ensures their dominance.

Nor is Johnson a Hindenburg, presiding over a state which is wracked by economic crisis, opposed by its own civil service and army, and held in contempt by strategically placed socialist and communist factions. Rather, Johnson stands in a tradition of centrism which, however, has been a viable politics only when the chief executive was able to rally significant liberal-progressive support—as did both Roosevelts and, to a lesser extent, Truman. But their very centrism—the necessity, as they saw it, to compromise with conservative elements—aborted the consolidation of a liberal-progressive wing which would consign the

old two-party system to the scrap heap.

Johnson's brand of centrism has been devoid of vitality, marked as it is by anticipatory surrender of policy objectives (e.g., the ridiculously small sums asked for in the foreign-aid and anti-poverty bills). But this in itself is a symptom of a deepening political disease: wheeling and dealing has become an end in itself due to the fragmentation of party structure, which now affects the Republican no less than the Democratic party, with no alternative instruments of politics in sight.

In his suggestive work, *The Deadlock of Democracy*, James McGregor Burns sees strong Presidential leadership as the most urgent need of American democracy. He calls for the abandonment of the "Madisonian model" of checks and balances, which act as a deadlock upon the levers of action, preventing or critically delaying the solution of urgent social and economic problems. Similarly, Douglass Cater in his *Power in Washington* — a more subtle if less historically oriented analysis than Burns's — argues that, "The central problem . . . is how to make power in Washington more cohesive. . . . The clear and present danger . . . is that government becomes disintegrate." This fragmentation of governmental power has resulted in the growth of virtually autonomous subgovernments — exemplified by the military-industrial complex, as well as by such less prominent collectives as the oil industry, the Farm Bureau, the American Medical Association. We

have the infrastructure of the corporate state, even though its authority remains largely extralegal still.

Beyond question, Goldwater would sanction the fragmentation in which Burns and Cater see such danger. He would seek to strengthen the legal framework within which the subgovernments operate. Yet, how much more strengthening can he do really? Can the distinction between, say, the regulatory commissions and the regulated be blurred more? Can Congress pass much more special-interest legislation than it has already? Can the Department of Interior collaborate more closely with the oil industry than it already does? Can the Public Health Service become very much more considerate of the chemical and drug industries? Yes, it's all possible, but how much difference would it make?

Johnson may well prefer being a "strong" President. But he remains essentially a congressional Democrat, wedded to centrist tactics, and by no means averse to subgovernments, to one of which he owes his rise. It would be illusory to believe that he will inspire a liberal-progressive alliance; on the contrary, he will do all he can when re-elected to mend the Democratic party, futile as that effort will prove to be. Such an alliance then must come from below; only thus can the basis for a strong Presidency be created. Voting for Johnson may be a political act, but it will not change the relationship of forces in this country, which are heavily weighted towards reaction and neofascism.

Paul Goodman

NOTES ON DECENTRALIZATION

I. *What Is Meant by Decentralization and What Is Not Meant*

Decentralizing is increasing the number of centers of decision-making and the number of initiators of policy; increasing the awareness by individuals of the whole function in which they are involved; and establishing as much face-to-face association with decision-makers as possible. People are directly engaged in the function.

Conversely, centralization is organization with top-down decision-making (on the basis of "upward communication"), departmentalization of the function, chain-of-command or bureaucracy, and maximum standardization of performance and procedure. People are personnel of the organization that performs the function.

Decentralization is not lack of order or organization but a different kind of coordination. Western science from 1500–1900 was entirely centrally coordinated. In its high early period, the free enterprise system of joint-stock companies was centrally coordinated. The American political system of limited powers and checks and balances is decentralist in principle.

Many functions must be centralized by their nature: Where there are no natural limits, or the function extends over the whole system, or the logistics is more important than the particulars—e.g., epidemic-control, setting of standards, certain kinds of production and distribution, unification and scheduling of transportation. Also, in situations where force must be collected and directed to an emergency. At present, we ought to centralize further in some functions: e.g., we ought to have modular standards and standard parts in building and in machinery. "Natural monopolies" like telephone-telegraph or railroads. And, internationally, where vast capital is required, like the moon shot.

At present, there is a strong trend to spontaneous decentral political

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action—in the direct-action movements, and also some trend in cultural fields, like off-Broadway or Summerhill. But to decentralize, to delegate autonomy to many centers, can also be a political decision of a central power, usually compelled by the fact that the centralization is not working. For example, the New York City Board of Education is experimenting with decentralizing.

In the present period, decentralized centers need not be narrow, isolated, or “provincial.” We exist in a post-urban, post-mass communication, post-centralist period. The decentralist kibbutzim might, by some, be considered as fanatical, but hardly provincial.

The fact of great populations does not prevent decentralization. Decentralizing is primarily a question of sociological organization rather than geographical dispersal, though that is sometimes involved. In a big city, the organization of arrondissements with neighborhood city-halls can importantly decentralize. A big university should be run by its many faculties.

Decentralizing is largely an empirical question and requires research and experiment (which it is not getting). The maxim of decentralization is to decentralize where, how much, and how it is expedient. For example, a gang or collective contract is used in important assembly-line manufacture in Coventry, whereby the gang determines its own working schedule, persons, and operations. In what industries in the U.S. is this feasible? How should it be tailored?

II. Present Excessive Centralization

In some aspects of social organization, there is historically a discernible cyclical swing between excessive centralization and excessive decentralization. Within the nation states at present there is, in most major functions, excessive centralization or centralism on wrong principles (just as internationally there is decentralization on wrong principles). Our emphasis ought to begin to be the other way.

Our present over-developed centralism goes back to a bureaucratic style perfected in the 18th century for taxation and policing; a military style developed with the emergence of the nation-states for logistics and to wage war; an economic style dominated by abstract money-profits rather than specific uses and work-processes; and—to a lesser degree—a style of industry determined by large concentrations of machinery around steam prime-movers, cash-cropping, and enclosures.

These have produced over-capitalized and often inappropriate technology, an inflexible and insecure tightly interlocking economy,

ignorant mass-consumption with a complicated standard of living of inferior quality, the development of sprawling urban areas rather than towns and cities, brain-washing mass-communications, mass-democracy without real content, and mass-education that is both wasteful and regimenting.

With these, there is a prevalent superstition that no other method of organization could be more efficient or is even possible, and that in all functions the reasonable mode of operation is by "rationalization" (subdivision, standardization, cash-accounting). Because of the superstition and the inflexible organization, these beliefs are self-proving. No other kind of operation or administration is paid attention or subsidized; no research is done into possibilities of decentralizing. Breakdowns in the centralizing system are handled not by examining the system but by patchwork or imposing new levels of control according to the same administrative style. Meantime the hidden costs involved in centralization are omitted from the cash-accounting.

This superstition confounds the real confusion accompanying unique conditions of modern life, new technology, urbanization, and one-world. For instance, automation, a centralized mode of production, is applied both where it is appropriate and where it is inappropriate, but little attempt is made to analyze these differences.

My bias is that automation should be applied to the maximum in the production of hardware and perhaps subsistence goods, in clerical work, etc.; but automation, computing, and standardizing methods in general, should be severely restricted in all human services, education, restaurants, social work hospitals, e.g., there should be a standard high-grade TV machine made by the millions and at minimum price—even though this would lose certain excellences of highest quality, styling, workmanship—but the larger part of programming should be decentralized and for specific audiences.

In all forecasts of the fairly immediate future, it is said that employment in commodity-production will be sharply diminished. But for useful leisure, the development of community culture, human services, and education, the rationalizing and cash-accounting style is inappropriate, whereas the decentralist style is enriching.

The grave threat in modern urbanization is *anomie*, the rootlessness and helplessness of individuals, the loss of citizenry. When it tries at all to cope with this, centralized administration tries to encourage "participation," but participation is empty unless it involves the possibility of initiating and deciding, that is decentralized administra-

tion. It is interesting to contrast the dull formality of a PTA meeting at which nothing important can be decided, with the liveliness of the public meeting of a local school board to which important authority has been delegated.

“Association” and “participation” are not mere interpersonal relations; they are sharing in objective enterprise.

III. Prevalent or Inevitable Defects of Centralization

However competent, the few at the top who decide in large centralized enterprises are not enough minds to do an adequate job. Top-managers—and independent professionals—are the most overworked members of society.

In “upwards communication” of information, at each level there is processing and abstraction from the concrete; and with each abstraction there is the accumulation of mere approximation and of actual misfitting. Much is left out altogether.

To cope with the multifarious details and persons of large enterprises, recourse is had to standardization. This leads to inevitable misfitting and loss of peculiar appropriateness and quality. It is rare that the standard procedure is the best in any particular case.

The subordinates, meanwhile, necessarily become stupider, since they cannot learn by initiation and responsibility. In a departmental system, much of each man’s capacity is unused. Each man knows only part of the process and so cannot really understand what he is doing. There is increased reliance on extrinsic motivations of salary, security, and perquisites, because subordinates cannot take satisfaction in completing the function. Finally, activity becomes time-serving and maintaining status, regardless of the function.

In established organizations, those who rise to the top also tend to be chosen by systematic rather than functional criteria. They are safe men. The image of performance is more important than the actuality. Since those who could criticize, colleagues, consumers, electorate, become stupider, the top men also become stupider.

The inflexible departments do not always dovetail; communication breaks down since few men have a sense of the whole. The resulting difficulties are solved by adding higher levels of control, more administrators.

Finally, the systems tend to run for their own sake. Since so much capital and so many persons are tightly interlocked in them, they cannot afford to risk any change; and any novelty or experiment involves dislocations and is “not worth the trouble.” A system running for

its own sake loses touch with its ostensible function and becomes isolated from the environment; its chief function is to protect, reward, and incestuously recruit its own personnel; its chief business is paper-work, public relations, and the maintenance of a routine production.

Unfortunately, when such systems are very large, they pre-empt the social means and space for carrying on their functions at all. There is no way to be effective outside the system and no way in the system, so people with inventive ideas and initiative become discouraged and either drop out or resign themselves to token performance. Worst of all, in many functions of society, simple direct action becomes quite impossible, even though it is commonsense and would meet with general approval. Eagerness and earnestness are stymied by licenses, merely formal standards, due process, confronting stuffed shirts, and the need for amounts of capital entirely disproportionate to the enterprise.

By and large, our country at present is constituted of a rather small number of great commercial baronies, organized as described, which are private powers; these are checked by the great public Power of governments; and there are also great entrenched organizations like the Pentagon, the FBI, the major Universities and school systems, the labor unions, and a few others.

The baronies compete semi-monopolistically, fix prices, and generally maintain the structure; and their relations with the labor unions are analogous. When Private Power confronts Public Power, e.g., in the regulatory agencies, the result is often a stalemate, so that there is no social motion. Often, however, there are alliances, as in the military-industrial, scientific agencies-universities, Urban Renewal-real estate promoters, etc., and these alliances lead to further aggrandizement of the same overgrown organizations and the products are not distinguished by ingenuity, beauty, thrift, or precise utility.

Despite the good intentions of many individuals in the system, this vast machinery of social power is almost powerless in most simple practical matters. Everyone in society, from lowly citizens to topmost leaders, shares the sneaking suspicion that "Nothing Can Be Done."

IV. Examples of Overgrown Systems

A. New York School System: A Classical Bureaucracy

(Let me say that I have affection for the earnestness of the N.Y.C. school

system, its attentiveness to the children as the main object, its sincere equalitarianism, its concern for all types and conditions; its dreamy desire to experiment. But its structure is a disaster.)

The structure has been aggrandized from an ancient plan with little change. E.g., in 1900, 6% of 17-year-olds graduated from high school; now more than 60%. The system now serves 1,000,000 children, there are 750 schools rather rigidly controlled by one headquarters; the annual budget exceeds \$700 millions—excluding capital improvements.

The following are expected, and actual, situations: to remove rats from a school, the principal cannot call an exterminator but must appeal to headquarters and go, in principle, to the Board of Estimate. To remove a door-catch (“city property”) requires years of appeal.

An architect is told that he is not allowed to consult the teachers of a school he is to replace; he must simply adapt standards plans that are a generation out of date, and were not good to begin with. Because of specific pedagogic conditions, a principal asks for sound-proofing, but no money can be allotted for that, although there is provision for much less urgent needs. A very old-fashioned type of door-hardware is specified, which is kept in production, for reasons of nepotism, only for the N.Y. school system.

Despite this bureaucratic pedantry, there are public scandals because janitors have been taking home \$50,000 a year, or a roof costs \$750,000 to fix, and still leaks. On the other hand, there are scandals because of trivialities: a high-school student has done carpentry on a boat for a school official.

When local school-boards (with rather unspecified powers) were re-established in 1962, at the end of a year of operation it was said that their main achievement so far was to make it possible for the field superintendents to communicate with headquarters (through the free-wheeling of the local boards), something which had not occurred in two generations. For instance, a rubber-stamp from the superintendent in charge of building was required to make alterations to a wall to install a valuable new press given to the School of Printing; all this would cost the city nothing, yet the rubber-stamp was delayed for nearly two years and a mountain of correspondence, till a local board complained loudly and got the stamp.

In recruiting teachers for such a vast system, processing takes nearly a year. Naturally, many of the bright new graduates go elsewhere, to the suburban communities. (Yet the civil service type of procedure

is necessary to avoid nepotism and political pressure.) Entirely irrelevant qualifications, and the tie-in with the graduate schools that license teachers, keep many fine teachers out. It takes many years to change an outmoded rule; for instance, the rule that a teacher must have no trace of a foreign accent, that made sense during the height of the immigration three generations ago, was a disaster when some districts had 35% Puerto Rican children who could not speak English, yet one could not recruit bi-lingual teachers; yet the rule has only now been modified.

The administrators, superintendents and secretaries, principals, assistants, clerks, guidance, attendance-officers, etc., proliferate; yet the fundamental educational fact, the number of children per teacher, cannot be altered because of the expense; but the large classes do positive damage to both children and teachers, so that the whole system perhaps does more harm than good. Correspondingly, each school is too large. Where intelligent principals ask for 400, there are schools of 1800 and the official limit has finally been reduced to 1200. The requirements of educational community are necessarily sacrificed to administrative convenience and ignorant public pressure.

Timidity, administrative unwieldiness, the need for standardization put insuperable obstacles in the path of experiment. When an experiment—e.g., the tailor-made Higher Horizons—succeeds on a small scale, it is diluted by being standardized.

(A considerable useful leeway is given to the principals—both in staffing and methods—so that the schools differ a good deal depending on the principal; but the teachers and staff-meeting have far too little leeway.)

Finally, this vast system is made increasingly inflexible by its interlocking with the other aggrandizing systems of society, to form one nationwide educational monolith. E.g., the textbook manufacturers, the graduate schools of education, the National Science Foundation, the proliferating national testing services, the corporations, the church, the Pentagon.

B. Monolithic Mass-Communications: A Constitutional Danger

The interlocking systems of mass-communications with a few decision-makers at the top of each system produces inevitable brainwashing and makes democracy impossible.

Some kinds of news and events do warrant standard national research-

ing and broadcast. Only great news services and networks can perform such services. Therefore we need a mixed system.

Fewer than 60 towns have competing newspapers (in 1900 there were 600). These are served by, now, only 3 international news services. With the best will in the world, these few persons cannot know what is all the real news. Three big broadcasting networks get most of their news from the same source.

The standard of living (how to be decent) and what is correct and tolerable in expression and entertainment is determined by these networks, the movies, and a few national magazines; but the sustaining advertisers are the same and the ownership elaborately interlocks.

This system requires creating a pervasive mass-audience and attitude. Anything that might offend a large segment (a few hundred thousand) must be excluded; the vast capitalization demands a vast coverage to pay for itself. There is thus an inevitable restriction to the sensational and the bland. (The Storm of Angry Letters that the sponsors fear may finally be as few as 20.)

Since there must be limited broadcasting channels, if the networks control most of them, there is an implicit censorship. And this becomes explicit when tapes are wiped out and certain speakers are officially or unofficially blacklisted. The FCC has proved powerless to compel reasonable coverage of everything worthwhile. The licenses once given are apparently in perpetuity.

The networks once established can wield enormous political pressure. (In one case of being threatened, a network was promptly able to produce 10,000 telegrams sent by children.) The equal-time provision has been abrogated for national elections—the networks are trying to extend the revocation to State elections. If they also control most of the local stations, this make it impossible for new political thought to enter into discourse.

The expensive network time makes for minute and second scheduling, and thus a format that prevents freedom of thought or art. Also the discouragement of using especially TV to cover actualities—since these might always prove either boring or untoward.

In publishing of books, there is similar concentration of capitalization (huge presses and teams of salesmen and promotion), and this increasingly determines the content and format of books, in order to make it possible to set such big capital in motion. And there is interlocking with magazines for serialization, with book clubs, with Hollywood.

The weight of publication, broadcasting, and journalism in the style, format, and acceptable content of the mass-media, decided by the few who rise to the top in such vast semi-monopolies, finally simply swamps independent and dissenting thought and style and constitutes a virtual censorship-in-depth. Over-exposed to one fairly homogeneous kind of interpretation, and under-exposed to any rival interpretation (and in some localities and on the TV medium not so exposed at all), people begin to take the interpretation of the interlocking mass-media for the reality; that is, they are brain-washed. This is a constitutional crisis for democracy.

C. Cars and Roads: Hypertrophy of a System Beyond Function

During the 20's, automobiles began to be sold for style and status rather than more serious function and convenience; this removed natural limitations on the proliferation of such formidable and expensive objects. Meantime, the middle-class suburbanites pressured the building of parkways. There is now a car for every 2.7 Americans, considerably more than one to a family.

The cars exist as the crucial element in a vast complex—of fuel, servicing, and highways—that entirely transforms the environment. Highways are built at a cost varying from a half million to three million a mile. After armaments, highway construction is the big item in Federal budgets, and it looms immensely in State budgets.

By 1970 the cost, with accrued interest, of roads for a single car-trip five miles to the center of Washington will come to two a half dollars (per car trip) each way. 50% of central Los Angeles has been given over to the roadways.

General Motors alone employs 600,000 people; its annual turnover is \$14 billions. The automotive complex (including oil and roads) has become indispensable to keep the economy going, so that a falling off of car sales can precipitate a serious recession. "What is good for General Motors is good for the country."

Three or four car manufacturers control the market, competing semi-monopolistically with fixed prices and improvements spooned out slowly. Progress in design has been determined entirely by profits; the increase in power has been largely for sales and is unfunctional for most situations. Even safety features are neglected. (Forty thousand are killed annually in automobile accidents.) Only the competition of European small cars made, for a time, a radical change. No effort has been made, e.g., to develop an efficient small slower-moving electric for urban use (taxis). Also, expensive as they are,

cars are built not to last, and the companies push for laws to exempt them from supplying repair-parts for longer than five years. Because of direct and indirect subsidy, cars and trucks have pushed other kinds of transportation out of the picture, especially for commuting. There is little effort to achieve a balanced transit pattern, using all means for the general convenience. In most large cities, traffic congestion and parking are almost intolerably inconvenient; the fleets of cars on the suburban parkways make no economic or psychological sense.

The cars and highways have imposed an entirely new and disruptive community plan. The tremendous suburbanization has become their creature. Villages and city neighborhoods are disrupted by highway shopping centers. Families are dispersed and the lives of children depend on automobility. Centralized plants, including central schools, claim per product efficiency, but the hidden costs of the highways and transportation are not counted.

Of course, most of this imposition of a new pattern would have been impossible if there had not been advantages and conveniences in the cars; but by hypertrophy the system has itself become the dominant cause. The highway planning now occurs independently and determines the location of communities and the manner of life in them.

In the mess we are in, however, the only conceivable remedy is public centralized regulation and planning. The automotive complex must now be treated as a "natural monopoly" and regulated.

D. Supermarkets: Logistic Planning That Proves to Be Inefficient

The effect of the hyper-organization of food-production, processing, distant transportation, and super-market retailing has been that the farmer's share of the take has persistently diminished (e.g., 44% in 1953, 38% in 1963), whereas the profits of the chains themselves have *not* risen, and food prices to the consumer have risen slightly. This is an application of Borsodi's Law: as the cost of production per unit diminishes because of centralized operation, the cost of processing and distribution increases disproportionately. This law is relevant especially for bulky and perishable commodities like food-stuffs, and where the fixed capital investment *can* be relatively low in proportion to the product (as in natural farming).

At present, \$1 out of every \$2 spent for food goes to 100 corporate or (not Rochdale) cooperative chains. 70% of all food sales is through the central systems. The 10 largest chains sell 30% of all food.

In this system, both farmers and retailers fall under the control and decision-making of the chains. Farmers contract long beforehand, regardless of weather or the ability to take advantage of sudden opportunities. The emphasis is entirely on large-scale cash-cropping. Farmer's markets in the towns and cities are closed. Inevitably, marginal farms must discontinue, and this is an important cause of the present excessive urbanization. (Farm families now make up less than 8% of the population.)

It is clear that in many thousands of cases, people would choose the farm way of life, if there were any possibilities of getting any cash at all; e.g., in some states a small rise in the farmer's price for milk results in many marginal farms resuming operation. But at present, farm subsidies overwhelmingly favor the big operators.

With the concentration of growing in huge plantations in Texas, Florida, California, etc., breeding and hybridization are determined by terms of canning, ability to preserve and ship, and appearance for mass-sale, rather than freshness, flavor, or nutrition. Very little is naturally nurtured or naturally ripened. There is excessive use of pesticides.

In the retailing, there is a profound change in consumer habits. Packaging assumes great importance, no matter what is in the packages. Consumers pay several cents more for a brand-name product (e.g., Clorox, although a locally bottled bleach is identical in every respect). Independent grocers are forced out, adding to the anonymity and anomie of urban neighborhoods.

Nevertheless, despite these disruptive changes in the way of life of farm and city, brought on by rationalization of food-production and distribution, there is little increase of actual efficiency.

V. Costs in Service Enterprises with Different Organization and Motivation

Consider a range of services where staff and overhead are the chief costs.

With extrinsic motivation and organization not growing from the function, the cost may rise by a factor of 5, 10, or more. E.g. the following somewhat comparable enterprises:

On Broadway, a modest play (without music) requires upward of \$100,000 to rehearse and mount, and \$20,000 a week to run. The standard estimate for an off-Broadway production, e.g., at the Living Theater, is \$20,000 to mount and \$2,000 a week to run. Professionally, these productions will be comparable in every way—we are not here considering the esthetic or community value. Contrast with both these types, an *ad hoc* production by artists, e.g., a play in the loft

of the Judson Church: this might cost \$50 to \$500 to mount and nothing at all to run, since the script, acting, staging and space are all gratis.

In TV, NBC sponsored time costs \$143,000 an hour for 220 stations, \$650 per outlet for the network, or \$2,000 for one station. This does not include the cost of the program: a very modest half-hour program costs \$10,000 to produce. Now compare two non-profit (educational TV) stations: WNDT in New York costs \$650 an hour to run, not much cheaper than commercial television (but this figure includes the cost of programming). On the other hand, KQED in San Francisco runs for \$225 an hour. The difference is that the top salary at WNDT is \$45,000, the staff about 150, etc., whereas at KQED the top salary is \$15,000, the staff about 50, etc. Professionally the two stations are equivalent, but KQED is much more daring and lively. (Characteristically, the staff-turnover at KQED is almost nil—we are obviously relying on artistic and technical motivation—whereas WNDT is a way-station for persons moving toward higher salaries elsewhere.)

In radio, WMCA charges \$700 an hour for air-time, excluding the cost of the program. But WBAI, a listener-supported station of comparable power, costs \$38 an hour to run, including programming (provided gratis by artists, academics, or the politically minded). WBAI is one of the 3 stations of the Pacifica Federation, which exchange tapes but are entirely independent.

A good non-residential private school in New York, class size 20, costs about \$850 per pupil per year, not counting plant and some endowment. An elementary pupil in the New York Public School system costs \$650, also excluding capital costs for plant and replacement; the class size is officially 29, but in fact most classes are 32–35. Thus public and private costs are similar. By contrast, a Summerhill school in Stony Point charges \$450 per child, provides, for 50 children, 3 full-time paid instructors and the equivalent of about 5 more voluntary teachers from among parents who are artists or professionals and teach part-time. (The Public system, by and large, discourages the entry of unlicensed teachers into the classroom.)

College tuition at Columbia or Cornell is \$1700, which is estimated to be a little more than 50% of the actual cost per student for “education and educational administration.” The mark-up over actual classroom costs is 400%. (At smaller liberal arts colleges, e.g., Wesleyan in Connecticut, the mark-up is 300%.) Especially in the freshman and sophomore classes, the professors lecture to very large

classes and the smaller groups are taught by ill-paid section-men. In the small colleges proposed in *The Community of Scholars*, the tuition is estimated at \$650, with 10 professors for 150 students,

The Peace Corps is a model of efficient and dedicated bureaucracy. Yet it costs more than \$14,000 to select, train, and maintain a volunteer for one year. (\$9,000 for the volunteer, \$5,000 for central administration, liaison with host countries, etc.) The Friends Service VISA program, which is comparable in essential respects, provides the same service for \$3,500 a volunteer. For another comparison, Operation Crossroads, pro-rated for the same period, costs \$5,000. Important causes of expense in the Peace Corps are the very rigid selection to protect the Image abroad (only 1 of 8 original applicants are finally sent), training in the setting of an American university, and propaganda and promotion. The Friends spend nothing at all on administration (the program is taken care of as an extra duty by their regular offices), prefer to train in the field where conditions are known, and their candidates have a service philosophy to begin with.

Official Urban Renewal planned for the West Village in New York City was to cost \$30 million (including a \$7 million subsidy), to provide net 300 units after demolition and relocation. A counter plan proposed by a neighborhood group would cost \$8½ million, without subsidy for net 475 units, without neighborhood disruption and relocation. The savings in this case come from tailoring to the actual needs by real architects rather than bureaucrats and promoters. The neighborhood plan comes to \$18,000 a unit. Incidentally, in a similar neighborhood, with the unpaid labor of friends, I remodelled a commercial loft to a comparable standard for \$500, and the rental at ordinary market value and amortization came to considerably less. That is: the professional neighborhood housing is cheaper than official housing, but artists' lofts are cheaper still.

There is no mystery what swells costs in commercial, official, and Establishment enterprises, where the organization, motivation, and procedure are not designed directly to fulfill the function. It is profits, patents, and rents; semi-monopolistic fixed prices; need for union-protection of workmen hired for somebody else's enterprise, union scales and featherbedding; salaries determined by considerations of status because the personnel is not intrinsically motivated to the task; expense accounts; proliferation of administrators, paper work, business machines; the waste of skill by departmentalizing task-roles and standardizing procedure inflexibly; high cost of contin-

gencies because of tight scheduling; public relations and promotion to shore up the Image.

On the other hand, when enterprises are run autonomously by professionals and artists intrinsically committed to the task, people make do on means and procedure; they become inventive by making decisions flexibly as opportunity presents; they keep their eye on the essence rather than the convention; they put in as many hours as are necessary without watching the clock; they use all available skills wherever available; they eschew status and sometimes live on a subsistence wage; and administration and overhead are tailored to what is indispensable for the concrete function.

VI. Typology of Enterprises in Terms of Engagement

A. Enterprises Extrinsically Motivated as Part of the Organized System:

1. Commercial enterprises, run for Profit as well as Status, etc. (E.g., NBC or the Broadway theatre.)
2. Official or Establishment Non-profit enterprises (E.g., Columbia University, WNDT.)

B. Enterprises Determined by the Function or Concrete Task:

3. Professional (E.g., KQED, Living Theater, Friends Service, West Village Neighborhood)
4. Artistic or Community (E.g., Judson players, WBAI, the Barker School, artists' lofts.)

Profit-motivated enterprises may or may not be more efficient than Establishment non-profit enterprises. Since performance in the non-profit field is largely symbolic, there is no attempt to cut costs. But the cutting of costs in profit enterprises is largely offset by the grasping, padding, and status-seeking of the personnel. An extremely extravagant model is the *combination* of centralized commercial and official, as in cost-plus contracts. This is the opposite of the TVA idea, where the official was to serve as a yardstick.

Intrinsic professional performance necessarily costs more than Artistic and community performance (which really costs nothing beyond materials and subsistence) because the persons are members of a licensed or peer-group guild; they are institutions, and this is usually necessary for continuous operation over a range of occasions. Artistic performances, on the contrary, are *ad hoc*. (For a continuously productive artist, each work is *ad hoc*.)

Add to these 4 Types, 2 other extreme types of production and service. On the one hand there are family, amateur, and folk enterprises, which do not enter the cash nexus at all, but are very important for the economic and social well-being. For instance, one nation might have a per capita "income" several times more than another, and yet the actual standard of living be very little different, since the "poorer" nation is more skilled and self-reliant.

On the other hand, there are the great background enterprises that fill universal needs, necessary for a modern society to function: municipal services, natural monopolies, literacy, subsistence, etc. It is probably most convenient and efficient to run all of these by free appropriation. The standards and motives of personnel should be strictly professional. (This is Marx's "administration" that is supposed to supersede the "withering away of the State," but, in my opinion, he extends the range of these functions too far and would make the whole society lifeless. These functions are best regarded as merely supportive and background.)

VII. Idea of a Mixed System

The above 6 types of enterprise are, in one form or another, operative in any modern society. But the proportions are, of course, very various—so the United States, Russia, Sweden, Nigeria, etc. have different real constitutions.

The idea of a Mixed System is a proportioning among types of enterprise so that they in fact influence one another pluralistically and if necessary can check one another.

A mixed system would try to keep the proportion of the types roughly within limits of maximum cost efficiency. (I doubt that the American proportion is at all within these limits. E.g. it takes \$30,000 in new investment to re-employ 1 workman.) This might involve *lowering* the GNP: e.g. cooperative enterprises often avoid cash transactions; a quality standard of living is less cultured and often costs less; skilled and engaged people do more directly for themselves and one another, e.g. repairs; a better rural-urban ratio, say 20% instead of 8%, would be more efficient, as well as more socially and culturally satisfactory.

A mixed system would allow various types of motivation and organization to do what they can do most appropriately and cheapest.

A mixed system would re-open opportunities for people to choose the way of working and living that most suits them, and would thus re-create the possibility of engagement.

Harold Rosenberg

THE THIRD DIMENSION OF GEORG LUKACS

" . . . everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations . . . are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts in the air . . ." The Communist Manifesto.

"I have tried to show that these [angst and chaos] form the essential content of modernism. This vision of the world as chaos results from the lack of a humanist social perspective." The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, by Georg Lukacs.

I remember Lukacs from the thirties as a Marxist literary critic who all agreed was a great, original thinker, though no one I knew had read more than one or two of his pieces. My own assent to his reputation was based on Lukacs's theory of "intellectual physiognomy," which explained what made characters in novels and plays profound or trivial. "Intellectual physiognomy" seemed to me the answer to a deep riddle of fiction: how an Othello or Lear could deliver wonderful utterances yet be convincingly stupid or raving; while a personage in an "intellectual" novel, e.g., one by Aldous Huxley, might philosophize brilliantly about abstruse issues yet produce an effect of shallowness. "Intellectual physiognomy" went boldly into the relation of intellect to insight, instead of the usual dodge of pitting them against each other. That Othello was endowed with an impressive intellectual physiognomy had nothing to do with his education, his "ideas" or even his mental capacity; it was a quality that descended to him from his author as a kind of family resemblance. Given a Shakespeare or a Tolstoy for his fictional father, an idiot becomes a genius without ceasing to be an idiot.

I don't know how accurate a description this is of Lukacs's idea. I am not even sure, after these decades, that I actually read the article

in which it was contained. Perhaps someone told me about intellectual physiognomy and I decided that that's what it meant. Nor did I ever try to figure out what intellectual physiognomy had to do with Marxism, unless it implied that the proletariat as conceived by Marx had, despite its illiteracy, a more profound character than the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals. But the bourgeoisie, too, as they sprang out of Marx's mind would be deeper than they appeared in ordinary experience. . . . At any rate, I have long admired the theory of intellectual physiognomy and its author with it. This admiration was not lessened by hearing from time to time that Lukacs was resisting Stalin's "socialist realism" and that during the Hungarian uprising he was at the age of seventy thrown into prison by the Russians.

The Lukacs who now comes forward in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, written seven years ago and just published in England and in the United States (under the title of *Realism in Our Time*),* has nothing to say about intellectual physiognomy nor any concept of comparable originality. He takes his stand as a Marxist foe of modernist literature—Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Musil—or of modernism in literature, and defends as an alternative, "realism" and the realistic tradition.

Much in the Lukacs we are presently privileged to read cannot be taken seriously; it requires an effort to believe that it was meant to be, though indubitably it was. Such statements as, "Our starting point is really the point of convergence of two antitheses: the antithesis between realism and modernism and the antithesis between peace and war," which line up literary modes on the two sides of current political struggles (are the Chinese modernists or realists?), wake one up to the distance that today separates one's thinking from what has come to constitute Marxism. Given this distance it is futile to dwell on the absurdities, exaggerations and misstatements of fact in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*; its very texture is made up of them—e.g., that with Thomas Mann "from *The Magic Mountain* onwards, socialism never ceases to be a central intellectual and compositional (!) element."

Lukacs, it turns out, has also failed to surmount the insensibility of Marxist criticism to the processes by which a work of literature actually comes into being. Creation, he believes (or his critical vocabulary compels him to say), takes place through the "translation" of a "consciousness of reality" into "adequate esthetic form." Thus he complains of the "selective principle which apparently underlies modernist writing" that "it is not a selection applied to the totality of the reality to be described"—as if it still needed to be demonstrated that works of

* Harpers, \$3.95.

art do not “describe reality” and that their “selective principle” is not “applied” but is an effect of imagination, temperament and the works the author has chosen as his tradition. Lukacs’s mechanic’s approach to literary creation as the analytical manipulation of facts and situations—“the realistic writer must seek the nodal points of these [social-individual] conflicts, determine what they are at their most intense and most typical, and give suitable expression to them”—raises the suspicion that his good (i.e., cleared of Stalinist perversions) Socialist Realism would result in no better writings than the worst.

It ought to be added that with all due reverence for the pathos of Lukacs’s resistance to Stalinism, some of his statements fall short of rudimentary honesty. In his Preface to the German Edition of *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, written in Budapest in 1957, he declares his joy at being able at last to speak “openly,” then calls for “relentless criticism” with the argument that “only on the basis of such criticism, *as with Rosa Luxemburg’s complex legacy*, can Stalin’s positive achievements be seen in perspective” (my italics). This abominable coupling of the inspired martyr of German Socialism with the sordid tyrant could have had no other purpose than to display orthodoxy in regard to strains of Marxist thinking condemned by the Party. It took another five years for Lukacs to permit himself a direct thrust at “the disastrous legacy of Stalinism.” And though he still gets into trouble, it is for belonging to a wing of Party opinion. Our sympathies for this side in the inner struggle of Soviet development ought not to mislead us into considering him a free mind or into overlooking the weight of intellectual backwardness in his literary opinions.

Lukacs thus turns out to be a thorough disappointment; one did not expect to encounter this much “Marxism” in the great Marxist thinker. The sole interest in the present collection of essays is the angle of Lukacs’s attack on vanguard literature, the fact that this attack is made from a premise that welcomes the revolution of the twentieth century. Other anti-modernist critics, say, Bernard Berenson or certain academic “humanists,” simply discard this century and its works and glut themselves on the art of other times. As a Marxist, Lukacs is obliged not only to see this radical period as a culmination, he must hold its upheavals to be a good thing. He is stuck with change, and in literature he must ask for more rather than less emphasis on the derangements of the time. If he is to judge modernist works as inferior he must do so not for their failure to measure up to the masterpieces of other centuries but for their inadequacies in dealing with the novelities of this one. That Marxism, like the polemical varieties of tradi-

tionalist criticism, for example, that of F. R. Leavis, locates the value of contemporary works in the degree of historical consciousness displayed in them, including the historical significance of their esthetic modes, is of itself almost a guarantee of its pertinence. Criticism by fiction of the historical drama in which we are all cast as actors or as victims, and of which there are no disinterested spectators, is what keeps the novel and the play going in our time above their commercial, academic and propaganda functions. Works deficient in conscious response to this drama, and the psychological, political, cultural, technical issues mixed together in it, are doomed to tiresomeness and triviality regardless of freshened-up mannerisms. We are thus at one with Lukacs to the extent that he examines modern styles from the standpoint of today and tomorrow rather than as incidents in an esthetic totality standing apart from or above time.

In substance Lukacs's objections to modernist productions are familiar to us from other sources. He plays the customary themes on disintegration in Joyce, the nihilism of Kafka and Beckett. The evils of modernist literature he finds to be abstraction, distortion, subjectivism, formalism—traits objected to by all antimodernists from Eisenhower to Pius XII. Lukacs's thesis that "the essential content of modernism is *angst* and chaos" (a thesis which can be refuted without much trouble—where is the chaos in Valéry or Mondrian?) parallels the opinion concerning contemporary *society* held by swarms of elegists of cultural decline, most of them reactionaries who hate the industrial age. The distinction of Lukacs is that his notion of the downward movement of literature is fitted into a coherent theory of social development. He condemns modern art in the name of progress, and in so doing exposes more fully than does any political pronouncement of the Communists what the Communist conception of progress is. And not only the Communist, for as a *liberal* form of Communism, Lukacs's criticism also reflects fairly accurately the cultural outlook of the Left generally and particularly its attitude toward modern art.

In the postwar novel and theater, despair, the "void," "loss of self," have become clichés used to organize episodes, language, images. One can hardly help sharing Lukacs's impatience with glib intimations of an underlying "human condition" that turns real events into mere illustrations of an irresistible sickness. As literary criticism, however, rather than metaphysics, Lukacs's condemnation of philosophies of *angst* and chaos is beside the point; he is obliged to distinguish between pantomimes of despair and its genuine poetry. You do not dispose of Kafka through refuting Heidegger nor through finding a comparable

"message" in a grade B movie. This is another way of saying that the issues of criticism cannot be stated, much less solved, in terms of mere abstract disputation. If Marx was right and "everlasting uncertainty" is a trait of the epoch, the effect after a hundred years would inescapably be to deposit a widespread tinge of *angst* in almost every feeling, and "continuous agitation" would have made "chaos" an element of contemporary sensibility. In finding forms for these states *as they are actually experienced*, modernist literature and art would represent not a timeless condition but the condition of the time. Lukacs submerges this problem in the very title of his chapter directed against modern art: it is called "The Ideology of Modernism." As with antimodernists of the Church, the State, the Rotary Clubs, the "distortion," etc., of vanguard forms is seen by him as owing not to the revolutionary character of present-day reality but to the errors or perversity of writers, their faulty "perspective." Adjust this perspective and the social equivalents of distortion (official lies, mass-communication fantasies), abstraction (alienated people, empty relations, things devoid of quality), subjectivism (the collapse and betrayal of ideals), formalism (the regulation of public and private life by impersonal systems) would presumably be overcome. Lukacs's version of dialectical materialism demands that conditions be cured in literature before they are changed in life. Art that takes its shape from the "everlasting uncertainty" is, regardless of its character, mere "naturalism" to Lukacs and inferior to "realistic" works issuing from the mental constructions of "the humanist social perspective." For Marx all that was solid was melting in the air; for Lukacs it has no right to do that in the novel.

Faced with extremist art, all antimodernists raise the banner of "realism," whether it be Catholic realism, the common-sense realism of the liberals and the Left, the "socialist realism" of Khrushchev, the taken-for-granted realism of the mass media and of 95 per cent of U.S. thinking and practice in fiction. Lukacs's discussion of "perspective" reveals that as an alternative to modern styles, "realism" means not the representation of contemporary reality, subjective or social, but its correction through ideological imperatives. For this descendent of the materialistic interpretation of history, social reality has become contingent on thought. In a situation that generates *angst*, *angst* itself must be driven out by defeating the "ideology of modernism."

What is marvelous about Lukacs is that he has developed a philosophy of resistance to change on no other ground than change itself. "The fact that in the midst of this 'permanent revolution,' this

endless 'revaluation of all values,' there were [twentieth-century] writers of major talent who clung to the standards of nineteenth-century realism is, therefore, of ethical as much as of artistic significance. These writers' attitudes sprang from the ethical conviction that though changes in society modify human nature, they do not abolish it." With permanent revolution set in quotation marks, Lukacs has discovered in "human nature" the key for turning Marxism into a species of traditionalism which shores up literature as a trans-historical order against the dissolving processes of twentieth-century development. Whereas in *The Communist Manifesto* the nineteenth-century leaps forward into the twentieth, with Lukacs the twentieth-century crawls back toward the nineteenth. Reality, Old Faithful, is still there in the streets and drawing rooms if only the novelists would put themselves in a position to see it.

All antimodernists, we said, pine for realism. Lukacs wants two: bourgeois critical realism and "socialist" (though not Stalinist). These realisms, he contends, represent the truths of successive historical epochs, but they are connected with and depend on one another. Bourgeois critical realism needs to turn toward Socialism as its goal in order to be able to face the present without sinking into *angst*; "socialist realism" needs to be aware of bourgeois realism behind it in order to be guided by its models and esthetic standards. Both realisms are continuations of the supreme works of earlier epochs; they hold the line of narrative and dramatic art through Shakespeare to Homer.

The test for Lukacs of the realist novelist or playwright is his ability to create solid, three-dimensional characters in contrast to the "shadowy blurs," stylized puppets or unlocated mystics of modernist fiction. Lukacs quotes approvingly the contrast noted by Camus between a character of Dostoyevsky and one of Tolstoy as "like that between a film and stage character" (as silly a distinction as one between a character on a page and one on a stage). Lukacs believes that the malady of shadowiness is getting more serious: already in the time of Zola he observes, it had become extremely difficult to create lasting human types, "the real criterion of literary achievement." Today matters are far worse. But the third dimension can still be achieved through correct perspective: here Lukacs once more recalls Bernard Berenson and his opinion that what made Giotto a great painter was the solidity given to his figures by the new science of perspective. Like Berenson he harks back to the Renaissance for "tactile values" which, Berenson said, will enable us to "realize his [the artist's] representations more quickly and more completely than we should realize the things

themselves." If everything solid has melted in the air, it is the job of the artist to put it together again through "the creative role of perspective." "Perspective, in this concrete form," Lukacs assures us, "is central to our problem."

Still, "lasting human types" are getting harder and harder to find in fiction, as on the street. This circumstance weighs heavily on Lukacs's literary judgments. The writers he praises as "major talents who clung to the standards of nineteenth-century realism" include Eugene O'Neill, the late Thomas Wolfe, the late Brecht, early Norman Mailer, who are either not "realists" or something less than "major talents." To oppose, as he does, Thomas Mann as a realist to James Joyce as a modernist is both theoretically absurd and esthetically obtuse. Disregarding the analogical and symbolic structure of *Ulysses* he states that in it "the stream of consciousness technique . . . is itself the formative principle governing the narrative pattern and the presentation of character." Mann's *Lotte in Weimar*, on the other hand, is superior because in it "the *monologue intérieur* is simply a technical device" (what becomes of the unity of form and content?) for exploring "aspects of Goethe's world which would not have been otherwise available," once more the mechanic's conception of the artist's technique as a tool for working on "reality." But the sum of the contrast is Lukacs's cultural conservatism, as revealed in his praise of Mann for upholding literary tradition: "however unconventional the presentation . . . the ancient rules of epic narration are faithfully observed."

Since Mann is the only first-rate twentieth-century writer Lukacs can even pretend to have on his side, and thus the sole ground for believing that "bourgeois realism" is in the running as an important tendency (a chapter in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* is entitled "Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann?"), it may be worth pausing on the latter's qualifications as a Lukacs "realist." The very physical setting of *The Magic Mountain* is intended to produce that "chaos" of time and values which Lukacs reprehends as "modernist." Lukacs bends his dialectical ingenuity to separate Mann from his contemporaries on the grounds that he differentiates between characters ruled by subjective and objective time. For Mann, however, the different senses of time represent opposing moral states, neither of which is superior to the other. Mann's organic-mechanical dichotomy corresponds to Bergson's view, which Lukacs repugns, and to the metaphysical split which governs the conversion of data into symbols in *Ulysses* (e.g., an old woman passing by makes Bloom think of the Dead Sea and salt as against a list representing the *élan* of growing things).

As for the solidity of the characters in *The Magic Mountain*, Lukacs's ultimate test of realism, Castorp and Ziemssen, Settembrini and Naphta (said to be a portrait of Lukacs himself) perform not as single figures "in the round" like characters in Balzac or Flaubert; they do their act in antithetical pairs; and they are composed of patterns of "naturalistic" details doubling as symbols, e.g., Castorp's cigars. Frau Chauchat is the personification of disorder—note the rattle of small panes of glass with which she enters the dining hall of the sanatorium and the consciousness of Castorp. The "flatness" of these personae is purposely emphasized by contrast with Peeperkorn, who is blown up to larger than life size, a kind of lumbering deity bumping against the clouds.

To make matters worse for Lukacs and the "third dimension," Mann's other great work, *Joseph in Egypt*, is set in the land of the frieze, and its protagonists are modelled on the serial figures of Egyptian wall painting. Mann makes his intention explicit in the first volume of the novel through a discourse on how the personality of the young Joseph shades into the images in his gallery of ancestors, so that the hero does not know where his history leaves off and those of Jacob, Isaac and Abraham begin. The "realism" thus attained is not Lukacs's "meaning of everyday life" but what Mann calls the "god story." In their indefinite dimensions his characters are closer to those of myth than to Lukacs's nineteenth-century egos, and by the same quality they are affiliated with HCE and Harold-or-Humphrey of *Finnegans Wake* and with Kafka's K, that is, with quintessential modernism.

Having once left the nineteenth century,* Lukacs's "realism" is no longer a descriptive category but an ideological wish (even Gorky possesses too many expressionist facets to fit in without doctrinal squeezing)—the wish common to all contemporary "realists," regardless of philosophical, political or esthetic differences, to believe that something is immune to alteration and is *there* to be described, without needing to be constituted anew in terms of its changing relations. Lukacs is seeking in literature what he misses in life: the firmly planted "complete" type. But what is this type except the class man of social formations now in distress? Solidity of character belongs to class society: the solid person of fiction is none other than the solid citizen. A character acquires three dimensions through being set permanently in so-

* Lukacs's *Studies in European Realism* (Grosset & Dunlap), also published recently in America, with an introduction by Alfred Kazin, comprises such authors as Balzac, Stendhal, Zola, Tolstoy.

cial space in the role of the aristocrat on the hill, the merchant in the marketplace, the peasant in the field. The density of the Balzacian or Tolstoyan protagonist is the effect of his being cut from a hardened lump of class soil.

Only the members of one social class lack thickness; the proletariat, Marx has informed us, is "denuded." Lukacs sees fictional types as national in substance. "Modern industrial labor," Marx replies, "modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him [the proletarian] of every trace of national character." There is another group that is perhaps in an even worse state: the revolutionary intellectuals. But what if the typical condition of man in the mid-twentieth century is that of workers and intellectuals? Instead of the citizen surrounded by his possessions, his family, the stable social landscapes, there appears the fellow employee or the professional who comes and goes. Things are no longer in place and the people seen by the novelist no longer pose against a static background. In that case, to be truly a realist he cannot duplicate the character scaffoldings of *The Human Comedy* (admired by Marx, we might remind Lukacs, for its radical insights into the social formations of the time and not because Balzac was conserving Western literary tradition or belief in "human nature"). The novelist of contemporary social fact achieves imaginative veracity through devising formal equivalents of the *multiple* perspective in which his experience appears: that in which "film" figures flash by in city crowds; in which varying densities of people are established through dealing with them in conferences, cocktail parties, love affairs, the family; that of the self in its metamorphoses and its absence of space which prevent its being grasped except through myth-making. The complexities and discontinuities of modernist fiction are accompaniments of the breakdown of class fixity. Lukacs recognizes this (though again blaming on ideology what has occurred in reality, like Stalin blaming on saboteurs and oppositionists a breakdown in wheat production) when he complains that the wispy personages of contemporary literature "presuppose the elimination of all social categories." A strange complaint for a Communist! Will not the literature of the classless society be populated by ghosts? In which case, ought we not trade in Socialism for Dame Quickly's tavern?

Lukacs has set himself against the transitional person of modern democracy. His "realism" is a literary version of the Leninist program of building the future upon planes of social differentiation which are to be gradually lowered toward a common level under a system of controls, like the locks of a canal. Unlike the medievalist, Lukacs accedes

to change in the structure of individuals and their relations; but he accepts it only under the regulation of inherited modes of consciousness in which the class formations of yesterday, or their equivalents, subsist for as long as possible. The anonymous person and anonymous groups struggling for visibility in modern mass society are to be overlooked by literature until a place has been delineated for them by political authority. The mold of man is to be set from above rather than be the product of man's own actions. Similarly, new esthetic possibilities are to be fitted into antique modes—"the ancient rules of epic narration"—rather than be developed as instruments of vision.

Lukacs is unable to see that massively contoured social identities ("lasting types") have been rendered obsolete by the emergence of a world culture beyond folkways or cult, and that modern *angst* is precisely the ambivalent response to the slipping away of established emblems of self. For this Marxist the issue for literature is not its capacity to enter into the range of new human potentialities opened up by the continuous loosening of social forms; as with the metaphysicians of despair whom he condemns, the issue is that beyond the solid types there exists for him nothing but emptiness and chaos.

The fear of nothingness cuts Lukacs off from the grand tradition he is so eager to see continued. It was evident to the author of *Ivan Ilych*, as to the author of *Oedipus*, that the three-dimensional occupant of social space was a fictional construction, a hollow dummy contrived for the eyes of others, and that in action this made-up shape would crumble—bringing a reversal of the situation and revealing a self belonging to a new order of being. To the dramatic poet individual identity has always been precarious and a pathos. In bringing *Ilych*, the solid, lasting type, to the fictional execution block Tolstoy was something more than a "realist"—as was Marx when he explained that class societies produce "abstract individuals" under which the real individuals are "subsumed"; in other words, that the social type is the not-self of the individual appearing as a positive shape, while the real self is unknown and awaits disclosure through action. On this theme Kafka would seem to be saying more than any of Lukacs's human-nature-preserving literary emigrants to the nineteenth century.

It worries Lukacs that "socialist realist" dogmatism may cause modernist critics to cover up "the deeply problematic nature of modernism itself." No doubt the problematic is the distinguishing trait of a consciousness truly of this time; this puts new art and ideas at a disadvantage in coping with disciplinarians of proper "perspective." To de-

fine modernism as a solution or as a worthy cause is, of course, ridiculous. Yet Lukacs himself introduces into art the war of dogmas when he writes: "We see that modernism leads not only to the destruction of traditional forms; it leads to the destruction of literature as such.* And this is true not only of Joyce, or of the literature of Expressionism and Surrealism." Such opinions are aimed at banishing the incentive to study the masterpieces of our age. They cause the mirror of modern literature to be turned to the wall, so that events take place blindly, while art becomes a copying of monuments in the oversized scale of the "humanist perspective." The net effect is a pervasive Philistinism. For Lukacs modern fiction is an esthetic and moral aberration that has somehow gotten in between the masterpieces of the past and the future. In time, he hopes, this distortion will be straightened out and the familiar proportions be restored. Then reality will be back in force. It is merely a matter of cancelling an epoch of error. Or shall we say, an epoch (our own) of human history?

* Compare the conservative Academician, Kenyon Cox, writing about The Armory Show fifty years ago: "the real meaning of this Cubist movement is nothing else than the total destruction of the art of painting." Poor humanity! To be compelled to endure this same empty threat for decade after decade, from all countries and from all ideologies.

NOTEBOOK

Bernard Rosenberg

The Example of Norman Thomas

Ours is an omnivorous culture. Even the most prickly and apparently indigestible of critics, like Lenny Bruce and Paul Goodman, get cannibalized. It ought therefore to surprise no one that a socialist leader in America should be universally honored as an elder statesman. Such is the fate of Norman Thomas, and not just now as he approaches his eightieth birthday; it has dogged him throughout his career.

Murray Seidler, the more scholarly and detached, if less intimate, of two biographers,* dubs Thomas a "respectable rebel," and sums him up as a "successful failure." The labels fit. We have to do with a complex paradox which tells us perhaps as much about ourselves as about Norman Thomas. Most people who have known him have loved the man while eschewing his principles. They seem largely to have agreed with the H. L. Mencken of 1948 who declared that it was "a rare and exhilarating pleasure" to hear Thomas, the only presidential candidate that year to strike Mencken as being a "really intelligent and

civilized man." Whereupon, most of them went out to vote for a Republican or a Democrat, too often neither intelligent nor civilized.

The virtues everywhere ascribed to Thomas are in very short supply among politicians, and we have shamelessly wasted them. Even when leavened by charisma within a big opportunistic party (say, by an Adlai Stevenson), intelligence and urbanity are not conducive to victory at the polls. Still able to exhilarate and even electrify an audience as spokesman for a minority party, Thomas has naturally never held public office.

Six times the presidential nominee of his party, Thomas has withheld his name from the ballot since 1948. Asked recently if he would run in 1964, he replied, "Run? I can hardly walk." Actually, he continues to walk at rather a brisk pace, on and off picket lines, and from one platform to another, still alert, still responsive, still animated by an irresistible spirit of gaiety. Nevertheless, there is just enough poignant truth in his witticism to make it infinitely sad that through all these decades such a man should have been allowed to run for president, governor, senator, mayor and never win.

* Murray Seidler, *Norman Thomas: Respectable Rebel*. Syracuse U. Press. 1961. Harry Fleischman, *Norman Thomas: A Biography*. Norton. 1964.

That a socialist should be excluded from the formal exercise of power, while being celebrated on all sides, is somewhat less puzzling than why this man should have become a socialist at all—for there can be little doubt that he could have made his mark in conventional politics.

Bernard Kops has said: "Take one Jew and already you have an opposition party." But a middle-class Presbyterian reared in Marion, Ohio? Take one, and already you probably have a more famous Marionite: Warren G. Harding, the cipher who played at being President. Young Norman was an all-American boy, an animal lover, much interested in sports, outgoing, a booster. The son and grandson of min-

The editors of **DISSENT** join
with his many friends in sending their
congratulations on his 80th birthday to
NORMAN THOMAS

isters, he too was destined for the cloth. There is no recorded rebellion at adolescence, no tempestuous rejection of parental beliefs, neither of the religious orthodoxy nor the conservative Republicanism that Thomas imbibed as a boy. Nor is there a breath of skepticism, let alone radicalism in the college student, Princeton-bred and insulated from hard realities, who does his stint as an old-fashioned social worker, becomes a seminarian and finally, a clergyman—albeit of the liberal persuasion.

What causes someone with such a life history to invite trouble, indeed to court it by defying the gods of his society? None of the usual clichés applies. In his thirties Norman Thomas ceased to be the Reverend Thomas.

He chose to embrace socialism and join a dissident little political party that had already seen its glory days. We may say, in the jargon of social science, that Thomas' relatively late change is an example of radical, adult, but not entirely discontinuous "resocialization." His brother and life-long soul mate, Evan, himself a pacifist, recalls, "... We were brought up to be good. Success was not a goal in our family." Thus the hyperactive conscience, if not all its elements, did have roots in a specific background which, when coupled with later experience, flowered into the personality we know.

As both Seidler and Fleischman make clear, the decisive experience took place over a period of ten years in the slums of New York City where Thomas and his bride—even less of a proletarian than he—devoted themselves to ameliorating the woe around them. Still a Republican, but greatly disturbed by the difference between life as he saw it and as he had been taught to see it, Thomas by 1912 had registered as a Bull Moose Progressive. In a class letter he wrote:

With all my love for Princeton, I sometimes think, unjustly of course, that my education really began when I left there and that not the smallest part of it has been the life here in this district. It is a sort of school which sets hard lessons and asks some difficult questions. What is our democracy worth? How shall we make it apply to our social, industrial, and political problems? Are we preparing well for national safety in peace or war when so many of our workers cannot even under favorable conditions make the proper living wage?

So the route was classically Fabian:

from a privileged position, through "poverty, filth, and vice" in the metropolis, to Christian, or at least a greatly muted Marxist Socialism. The vain effort to grapple with overwhelming social problems at a Settlement House level made many a pre-professional English or American social worker conclude that total change was necessary. Later, with the professionalization of social work and the conversion of many "angels of mercy" into "snoopy civil servants," a narrower psychiatric emphasis took over.

Having learned the lesson that "our various reform efforts were, in the words of the familiar simile, like bailing out the tub while we kept the faucet running," Thomas was ripe for socialism. In 1907, shortly after graduation from Princeton, he took a trip around the world; in a quasi-clerical capacity, he was able to see much of Asia, and there, starting with a view of empire much like Kipling's, he learned to despise colonialism. All the while he was reading widely, a habit with which he is still afflicted.

Then came the war which propelled Thomas out of his pulpit for good, and plunged him into pacifism and socialism, movements which that war almost certainly doomed to failure. The Thomas family crisis must have been very acute. Of the elder Thomas' four tall sons, two had no great scruples about military service, the other two conscientiously objected to it. Evan, accurately described by Seidler as "an eccentric blend . . . part socialist, part anarchist, part pacifist, part agnostic," went to prison under barbarous conditions, subsequently became chairman of the War Resisters' League, continued unremittingly to struggle for

peace, and flirted with but never joined the Socialist Party. Their soldier Brother Ralph wrote to Norman in February, 1918, "I am sorry we don't agree in this, the biggest affair of our lives, but you know I respect your courage of conviction and idealism." Norman Thomas perpetuated this politically permissive attitude within his own family; he never sought to impose socialism on his children; he is dear to them, but they are no more heirs of his legacy than the public at large.

A solid substratum of tolerance, then, underlay all differences among the Thomases over several generations. This quality helps one understand that character which so many find very nearly exemplary. Thomas could always laugh, not least at himself, and though often grim and stern, he has never been subject to fanaticism, the ideologue's occupational disease. It is hard to resist the conclusion that just those elements in his makeup which militated against election to office made it certain he could leave a great impact upon the nation. To an extraordinary degree, he has become what his campaign literature always claimed for him: the incorruptible watchdog of American society.

Not that Thomas is a saint. He points to his own irascibility and impatience (if only to offset the many encomia which sound to him like premature obituaries). A great naivete in personal relations is the commonest criticism one hears nowadays. Yet this too reflects favorably on the man, for it is said that he too frequently allowed himself to be deceived by assuming that the integrity of others was as great as his own.

What else is wrong with Thomas? Well, both biographers assert that his otherwise superb speeches suffer from over-rapid delivery. Seidler attributes this oratorical weakness to Thomas' habit of talking fast into the telephone during the period when A. Mitchell Palmer's boys might be listening, and Fleischman to the Party's penury which required Thomas to cover everything over the radio in a breathless fifteen minutes.

All the same, Thomas has been taken to task severely enough throughout most of his life, from left, right and center, outside and inside a party historically given over to factionalism —when not engaged in the more serious business of fratricidal warfare. After the First World War, Thomas emerged as leader of a Socialist Party in the doldrums. It had grown steadily and flourished from 1901 to 1912. The year Thomas voted for Teddy Roosevelt, Debs polled nearly a million votes, and in this same year, Seidler reminds us, the Party was able to boast that 1,039 of its members were public officeholders, including 56 mayors, more than 300 aldermen, some state legislators, and a member of Congress. The party had a vigorous youth movement, thirteen daily newspapers, 232 English and 36 foreign-language weeklies, twelve monthlies, a copious flow of pamphlets, growing strength among students and in organized labor where the Socialist Max Hayes gave Gompers a real run for the AFL presidency. And in Debs, Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger, American Socialism could claim an attractive group of leaders.

Then, in 1914, all hell broke loose. In the wreckage of World War I we

may find the remains of socialism, a shriveled token of international brotherhood. Soon after war broke out, Thomas recalls, "Socialists were killing socialists as cheerfully, or docilely, as Christians were killing Christians. Democratic Socialism in 1914 missed a tremendous opportunity of a sort which never could return again." That the powerful Socialists of Europe betrayed their principles and that Thomas stood by them, isolating himself from chauvinists of every stripe, is a matter of historical record. So is the general collapse that followed. Why did socialism fail to catch fire in the United States? The list of reasons is a long one (the Russian Revolution, Fascism, the New Deal, the Second World War, the conservatism of American labor, its comparative well-being, and so on), but none was as profoundly shattering as the Great War.

That war, to which most Americans rallied with a romantic enthusiasm such as they were never again to know, caused widespread departures from the Socialist Party. Thomas does not exaggerate when he observes, "I entered the party just as everyone else was leaving." And hardly a moment too soon. The War and the Red scares of 1919–20 left their mark. Debs had not long to go, his last years were clouded, and few thought the party could outlive him. A biographer of Debs, David Karsner, intoned in 1924, "It becomes increasingly clear as the Socialist Party steps into the shadows, that it was a one-man organization . . .", a view interminably repeated since Thomas's formal assumption of leadership in 1928.

As an organization man, it is gener-

ally admitted, Thomas was no great shakes. Even his loyal campaign manager in 1944 and 1948, Harry Fleischman, scores Thomas for having been bored by organizational details. The Socialist standard bearer really came to life only in discussing issues. "In public speeches, he would stir his audience and then all too often forget to urge them to join the Socialist Party." Seidler, by contrast, credits Thomas with reawakening the party through personal communication between various locals and national headquarters, and doing "yeoman service . . . on a strictly organizational level." He was a tireless and apparently effective fundraiser. For years Thomas appears to have known more about local conditions by maintaining direct ties with local activists than anyone else in the party.

And yet, and yet — the party was hideously undone by factionalism. It tore American socialism apart from 1930 to 1940. Was Thomas' incapacity to handle internal schisms responsible for all the bitterness of those years, the dissipation of energy, the scar tissue that would not heal? It would seem that the role he played exacerbated a bad situation. Would another stance (short of Lenin's disastrous "democratic centralism") have helped? Surely not much. Let us glance at some of the prevailing circumstances.

First of all, a millennial spirit and an apocalyptic atmosphere. In the thirties capitalism was actually crumbling; socialists had reason to feel vindicated. It seemed to them that the rest of their vision would also soon unfold, and that, with proper tactics, socialism was within their grasp. Each faction thought it knew best how to

attain the cherished goal. Those who at the time squabbled over esoteric dogma can scarcely remember what it signified, but all are agreed that their faction-fighting bordered on savagery.

A second factor, which Seidler and others have emphasized, was generational conflict: younger people in the party versus older people; newcomers, keen on innovation and bristling with verbal radicalism, pitted against a more conservative Old Guard that had long controlled party policy and machinery. With the depression, there was a big spurt in membership, which increased the distance between hot-heads and coolheads. These contingents, subtly subdivided in ways that no longer bear recounting, made up the two big factions and produced the great split of 1936 which decimated the Socialist Party beyond hope of recovery.

The conflict, further complicated by tension between foreign-born and native members, and sectional rivalries, as well as Thomas' determination not to be a mere figurehead, had been simmering for some time. At the National Convention of 1932, an attempt was made to oust Morris Hillquit as national chairman, and some of the grounds used by his opponents, at least by innuendo, smacked of anti-Semitism. There were murmurings about that foreign-born New York Jew, which prompted Hillquit to tell the delegates: "I apologize for being born abroad, for being a Jew, and for living in New York." This shamed them into re-electing him—without damping the fires of discord. Torn many ways, the party nonetheless did unusually well in 1932, an electoral peak for Thomas which must have thrown a

little scare into FDR, who appropriated some planks from the Socialist platform. ("Roosevelt carried it out," New Dealers used to say. "On a stretcher," Thomas would add.)

Ferment in the party did not abate. Three factions, "Thomasites," young Militants and Old Guardists crystallized as they moved toward a painful showdown in the national convention of 1936. Thomas for the most part occupied a centrist position between his party's left-wing and its right-wing. The pamphleteering, the cruel in-fighting and the passionate speechifying that ensued have been amply documented from every point of view. Controversy swirled mainly around a resolution called "Declaration of Principles," drawn up by a Militant, some of whose passages appeared to be sounding a Bolshevik clarion call. Thomas found himself in full sympathy with neither faction, and failing in strenuous efforts to reconcile them, finally sided with the Militants, an act symbolized by his vote in favor of their Declaration. A majority of the delegates likewise endorsed that misbegotten manifesto. Whereupon, the Old Guard withdrew.

The Thomas of 1936 was a trifle "soft on Communism," although not soft enough to satisfy those of his comrades in the Socialist International who would have liked to support the Popular Front. But in another year or two, with the Moscow Trials, Thomas took the full measure of Soviet totalitarianism—of which he became a principle scourge and to which he consistently offered a democratic alternative.

It cannot be denied that Thomas was briefly, if not very seriously, mis-

taken about Bolshevism and Stalinism, nor that Louis Waldman and other representatives of the Old Guardists were, in this respect, right. But there is a final fillip to the story that should not be forgotten. The Old Guard no sooner deserted the Socialist Party than it joined the American Labor Party—which was dominated by the Communists, who never managed to infiltrate Norman Thomas' Socialist Party except as spies. And the Militants? Most of them objected to Thomas' moderation—until they drifted to the New Deal, and shyly or ardently espoused it.

How should Thomas have comported himself in this whirlpool? He has been taxed, notably by Daniel Bell, for not going along with the Old Guard (a few of whose remnants rejoined the Socialist Party in 1957) and mercilessly ridiculed as a phony socialist, notably by the Trotskyist intelligentsia that entered his party in bad faith in 1939, only to break off another chunk of the membership (and some of its remnants rejoined the Socialist Party in 1957). He is criticized both for his intransigence and for his latitudinarianism, and maybe each in its time was inappropriate. Perhaps. Perhaps he should have been lax when he was firm and firm when he was lax. The only pertinent question remains: would it have made any difference? There is now no reason to believe that it would. And if the issue is not just tactical but moral, then Thomas' stature is not diminished, while that of his critics is.

In a monograph on American Socialism, Bell pinpointed two grave flaws in Thomas as a party leader: he

distrusted his own generation and surrounded himself with younger men who allegedly stood in an admiring and uncritical relation to him. To this indictment, Fleischman offers a convincing rebuttal:

To a certain extent, Bell's charge that Thomas preferred the company of younger men in the Party is correct. But he fails to explain why. In the thirties, most of the older men in the Party were Old Guardists, who elevated inactivity to the dignity of a theory. There were some Old Guard leaders, however, whom Thomas not only respected but warmly liked, such as B. Charney Vladeck and Abraham Shiplacoff. As for the young men, far from being "admiring and uncritical" of Thomas, they were hypercritical—and usually on flimsy grounds. They considered themselves "more revolutionary" than Thomas and better theoreticians. But Thomas sympathized with their zeal, and felt that time and experience would tone down their left-wing dogmatism. (As one of those youngsters, I can testify that Thomas was right about our development. Most of us agree that he was far more correct than than we were.)

With both wings gone, the Socialist Party could hardly be expected to soar. In the forties, it nearly perished of blows more crushing than those that had already been absorbed. With another World War in the offing, many interventionists dropped away (quietly, in deference to Thomas, as part of a "silent split"). Of those who remained some were pro-war, others anti-war. Thomas had abandoned absolute pacifism by backing the Loyalist cause in Spain. Thus when he opposed American entry into the Second World War, it was not for doctrinal reasons. The

handful of Socialists who favored war stayed with their few confreres who were against it in a miniature of the "all-inclusive party" that Thomas had once dreamed of creating. His own passion for peace, based partly on a mistaken conviction that war would totalitarianize the United States, led him to his lowest fortunes. He who had spurned common action with the Communists, for a brief time consented to common action with the America First Committee. That there were many liberal isolationists willing to do likewise in no way absolves him of a cardinal blunder. Our pride in him stems very largely from his avoidance of pitfalls constantly trapping liberals. Lending his good name to America First and its bigots only demeaned him, for no cause could justify this unnatural alliance. Fortunately, it was a passing aberration. After Pearl Harbor Thomas adopted a position of "critical support" for the war—thereby shocking and losing pacifists without gaining any new adherents.

If Thomas hit bottom in 1940, he may well have reached his high point four years later. Today, he views the campaign of 1944 as the most satisfying of his career. Not, surely, on account of the votes cast for him, a paltry 80,518, but because of the sensible message he alone carried to the people. Who else was there to excoriate the President for violating the rights of Japanese-American citizens when they were transported to our very own concentration camps? To proclaim that Soviet Russia, for all the liberals' renewed infatuation with it, was still a slave state? That unconditional surrender was an insane policy?

If, twenty years later, the Liberal Establishment could be made to read those speeches and to compare them with the productions concocted for Roosevelt and Dewey, the effect would only be embarrassing, and just possibly, chastening. There is no ectoplastic presence in anything Thomas ever says, for one reason because he cannot afford ghost writers, and for another, because he finds them morally offensive. The quips he made in '48 about Truman and Dewey (Truman asking his speech writers, "What's it going to be tonight?" and Dewey pictured as a candidate "clad each day in a pair of platitudes") apply as well to scores of political opponents Thomas has bested simply by speaking for himself.

He speaks and he speaks, not only through his miniscule political party, but through the many voluntary organizations he has had a hand in founding. Tocqueville contended that only with a multiplicity of such organizations could democracy be secured and preserved. If so, then in helping to build the Civil Liberties Union, the League for Industrial Democracy, the Post-War World Council, the Workers Defense League, SANE, The American Committee on Africa, Spanish Refugee Aid, Inc., and many more—all intrinsically valuable—we begin to see the magnitude of his contribution.

There is no end to the tributes, and

no doubt about their accuracy. Here is Bryn J. Hovde, former president of The New School for Social Research, echoing many others on Thomas:

His function in our public life has been that of planting doubt where other leaders thought they had implanted certainty, that of arousing controversy about alleged divine inspiration in economics, that of holding up, always with hands of glowing utterance, the shape of a better world than that we have. Norman Thomas, in all his strenuous campaigning, never ran for office. There was never any prospect of his election—to office, that is. He was elected to be sure, or to use the language of his profession "elect," to serve greater purposes than administration. He is "elect" in the way of Isaiah and Micah, a prophet among us to chide us when we do wrong and to show us the light.

But how many of us see by his light? When Thomas insists in 1964 that the basic problems to which socialism addressed itself remain unsolved, he is advancing an elementary truth which few Americans care to face. To face it would be to recognize that he is not a prophet with premonitions of doom for mankind in some vague and indefinite future, but a man devoted to saving us from race suicide right now. The canonization of Norman Thomas is no substitute for the fulfillment of his vision, and celebration of his character no substitute for acting upon his truth.

Paul Jacobs

The Brutalizing of America

We Americans have always been a violent people, quick to flare up in self-righteous anger and lash out at our enemies. We are brutal, too. But the kind of brutality to which I am referring is not primarily physical, although often its consequences are. Rather, I am concerned with the *passive* brutality of men who seem not to possess reason; men who are irrational, unthinking, without life or sensibility; men without souls. Sometimes such men jab electrified cattle prods into people, let loose dogs on them, or slam students to the ground with high pressure streams from fire hoses.

But those who participate in such ugly physical violence are not the only brutes. Violent redneck resistance to civil rights for Negroes is one mark of the brute; the polite businessmen who sneer at the suggestion that they should contribute a tiny percentage of their profits to help the poor are brutes too, dressed up in dinner jackets.

Of late, the poor have been rediscovered in America. Millions of punched cards are clicking through the sorting machines and data about the poor is being fed continuously on tapes into the humming computers

whose lights flash on and off as a new set of tapes emerges triumphant, from the other end of the machine. The poor are being stratified, classified and quantified. Reporters from *The New York Times* and the *Podunk Gazette* are busy on their new poverty beats.

But often a kind of unconscious cruelty results from this spurt of well-motivated concern with the poor. William Dean Howells once said of Tolstoy that,

It is wonderful what Tolstoy has done. He could do no more. For a nobleman with the most aristocratic tendency, to refuse to be supported in idleness, to insist upon working with his own hands and to share as much as possible the hardship and toil of a peasant class which but recently was a slave class is the greatest thing he could do. But it is impossible for him to share their poverty for poverty is not the lack of things; it is the fear and dread of want. That fear Tolstoy could not know.

Howells was right. Tolstoy could not know the fear and dread of want. Neither can I nor any other person who lives among the poor but is not poor himself. Thus, even the most serious investigators of life among the poor suffer grave handicaps in their work. I number myself in this group, but no matter how I try to get some sense of what life is like for the poor by traveling the country as an un-

* Revised from a speech originally delivered to the Annual Conference of the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, May 21, 1964 in San Francisco.

employed worker, living in shabby skid row hotels, sitting in dreary casual labor offices, working as a dishwasher or stooping over tomato vines, I can only get glimpses of what it means. No matter how little money I take with me, I cannot know what it is like to really have very little money. It doesn't really matter that my sheaf of credit cards is left at home on the dresser when I put on my old clothes to go out as an unemployed worker, for I know that I can escape this ugly life *at will*. And that is my great handicap in understanding the poor for, unlike me, the poor cannot exercise their free will to escape. They are trapped, separated from our conception of a decent life not, as I am, by a bus ride or a telephone call, but by a gap so wide that my normal life is only a fantasy world to them.

Certainly, then, it is impossible for the President of the United States to *really* learn the reality of life among the poor. He must travel accompanied by a score of Secret Service agents, a press secretary, communications specialists, government officials concerned with the administration of programs, politicians who want their photos taken with him, and the eager press. Under such conditions, no matter how well-intentioned he is, how can he learn about the psychologically crippling effects poverty has upon those who must live in it, especially when all his visits to the poor are, literally as well as figuratively, flying ones?

And so, after he and his helicopter entourage have left the torn-out gulches of Appalachia and returned to the big white house in the city, not much remains for the poor people who must continue living in the shanties.

As they trudge down the road to get their surplus food packages, about all that remains of his visit is their reminiscences of how "folksy" LBJ was: he talked their language and knew all about beagles.

I am not trying to suggest that President Johnson is using the poor for political purposes, as the Republican Party is so busily charging. Obviously, no President, in an election year, does anything or at least very little, without an eye to its political consequences. But despite the obvious political use which can be made of the poverty issue, there is evidence that the President is genuinely interested in the problem of poverty and genuinely disposed to help alleviate it. But he is wrong to call the program he has proposed a "war." It is not, and the President ought not to mislead the public by describing the worthy projects he has proposed as being part of an all-out war.

A real war against poverty cannot even be started with a billion dollars that have been juggled around from various other budgets. A real war against poverty would take many billions of dollars. It would require lifting minimum wages to at least \$2.00 an hour; the minimum wage would then need to be extended to all workers, including those in agriculture who also need the coverage of unemployment insurance. A real war on poverty means vast increases in transfer payments made to the aged, to those physically unable to work and to the displaced workers who are incapable of being trained for new jobs.

Above all, such a war may mean the creation of new jobs by government,

for the record of private industry is a dismal one. To cite only one example: last year, the private sector of our economy did not create a single new job for teenagers at a time when the labor market is being flooded with youth. Indeed, between 1957 and 1963, a period when the population of the United States increased by more than 17 million people, private industry generated only 300,000 new full-time jobs. *Nearly half the jobs added to the work force since 1957 have been in state and local governments.*

One of the most important parts of the Administration's present anti-poverty program is the Job Corps. It proposes to give some kind of vocational training to thousands of young men and women. But if those young people are just as unemployed when they finish their training period as they were when they started, we will have done them a grievous injustice. We will have raised their aspirations without providing an opportunity for those hopes to be realized. And that is cruelty, that is brutality.

President Johnson feels compelled to describe as a "war" what Dr. Arthur Ross, more accurately calls a "border skirmish." Simultaneously, the President obviously also believed that politically his program could be sold to the Congress and the public as a wall only if it came in the large economy-size package. He and the proponents of the bill continually pointed out that the poverty war is a very cheap one, that the program contains no new money appropriations, but only consolidates already existing or proposed legislation in a new Act under the direction of Sargent Shriver. And this

cheap war was proposed at a time when our Defense budget is \$57,000,000,000 per year. Even worse, the Administration made important compromises of principle in its frantic effort to get the bill passed, even sacrificing, unnecessarily, Adam Yarmolinsky to satisfy the yowling of the North Carolina Congressmen, who see in Yarmolinsky the devil incarnate.

The President may have been right in his judgment that Congress and the public would resist the kind of large-scale expenditures required for a real war on poverty. He may have been right, for we have become insensitive to poverty, and only too willing to accept myths to account for its continued existence. *The poor are still objects to us, objects to be studied, objects sometimes to be used for political purposes, or objects who should be helped because to do so will cut down on public assistance payments.* It is bad business to have poor people, the businessmen are told, while another popular argument advanced is that if we have poor people in the midst of affluence, we will look bad in the eyes of the world. The idea that poverty ought to be eliminated because it is immoral is advanced only rarely. So, too, the concept of over-all economic planning to abolish poverty is voiced generally by those outside the government structure.

The poverty program also lacks, quite apart from new ideas and a great deal of money, the kind of personal identification, the personal quality, the personal involvement that have made the Peace Corps, for example, so successful. It is only the personal commitment of the individuals involved in the training of 100 functionally illiter-

ate Negroes in Norfolk, Virginia, that made it possible to overcome at least some of the enormous and unexpected problems encountered in the program. The staff, itself made up of Negroes, discovered it had great difficulties in recruiting other Negroes and then in communicating with them. Before the training was completed, it was necessary to bring in the whole battery of social services found in the community. Finally, usually unsuccessful attempts were made to persuade reluctant middle-class employers to hire the high percentage of trainees with arrest records. Without a staff, willing to work endless hours at low pay, the program would have failed completely.

The belief in service was once far more prevalent in American life than it is today. It is not only absent from the anti-poverty program, but from society as a whole.

Only a few teachers now volunteer for work in slum schools. How many doctors in New York are willing to give up their lower Park Avenue practices for one on upper Park Avenue; how many doctors in San Francisco are willing to exchange a lower Sutter Street address for one further out on the same street? But it is not just the doctors and the teachers who fail to give freely of themselves; that failure is endemic to our society.

One important reason why the idea of such service is resisted is that we have accepted, as a nation, a set of myths about the poor American and why he is poor. It is American technology, the President says, which now makes it possible to eliminate poverty—as if it had been the lack of technology that in the recent past held us back from doing this!

Obviously, we are better off today than when President Roosevelt, in 1937, called one-third of the nation ill-fed and ill-housed, for now only one-fifth of the nation is ill-fed and ill-housed. But the ugly fact that we have not cut down substantially on the proportion of the poor is a sign of our brutality. Our technology has become the wonder of the world, but while other industrial nations with far less natural resources than ours have succeeded in virtually eliminating poverty, we still have it. It is certainly true that for the majority of the population, affluence is a reality today in some measure at least. But this fact only compounds our guilt, for that improvement has not been accompanied by a growth in responsibility for the less affluent. Instead, more and more have turned their backs on the poor and, much worse, on the children of the poor.

The distribution of income in the United States follows this pattern. In 1890, a very tiny percentage of the population owned most of the country's wealth. Today that wealth is spread far more widely, but still disproportionately. Even worse, since 1947, no substantive change has occurred in the distribution of income among the poor. In that year, the 20% of the families with the lowest incomes received only 5% of the national income, while the top 5% of the families received 20% of the national income. In 1962, fifteen years later, those proportions were exactly the same.

Unfortunately for the poor, they have no organized voice and no economic power. Unlike the farmers, the

mute farm workers get no subsidies. There are more lobbyists for utility companies congregating in the state capitols than there are lobbyists for pensioners. Unions seek to raise the wages of their working members, but can do little for the unemployed. And so, because no one speaks for the poor, not even the poor themselves, the gap between them and the rest of society widens more and more.

The lack of real communication with the poor, of contact with their real problems and knowledge of their aspirations means that the poor are not, as yet, involved in making plans for improving their lot or helping to carry out such plans. It is only when the poor overlap with another group, as they do with the Negroes, that they have a voice, albeit a middle-class one.

The leadership of the Negro civil rights movement does not come, generally, from the 2,000,000 poor Negro families. Being arrested in a demonstration at the World's Fair is a middle-class action; the youth in the South trying to register Negro voters are from the middle-class; the shouting pickets in front of the automobile dealers in San Francisco are from the middle-class and such actions as these are carried out in the framework of a legal structure which takes into account demonstrations, voter registration drives, picketing and even rude shouting.

But the civil rights movement says very little to those unemployed, demoralized Negroes living inside the black ghetto, whose only contact with the white world is through the police, the probation officer and the welfare worker. The civil rights struggle and the civil rights leaders have only tenu-

ous connections with those Negroes, for that fight is taking place inside the context of a society with which they have no identification. Only a tiny percentage of the poor Negroes have any concern with whether or not the Bank of America hires Negro tellers; the fight for such jobs, necessary as it is, reflects middle-class attitudes not found inside the squalid slums where the truly impoverished Negroes live.

Thus, the prospect before the country is not only one of challenge to the status quo from the reasonably well-organized and reasonably well-disciplined civil rights groups, fighting for reasonable demands. There is a far grimmer prospect, too, that the kind of race riots already occurring will spread, that lower class Negroes and lower class whites, without any commitment to the rule of law, will try to destroy each other as they lash out in blind anger at the reality of their lives. We may yet pay in future physical brutality for our past psychic brutality.

Far more fundamental changes in society are required if the unskilled, declassed Negroes and whites are to find any useful place for themselves in the technological age. Even before they can learn technical skills, they need to be made literate, they need to learn about foods and diet, they need to learn birth control information, they need to learn the basic rules of behavior which keep abrasive personal relationships at a minimum. And those who are to work with this group need preparation for the culture-shock they will experience in these communities where words have a different meaning than in the world outside.

Thus, the great challenge of the next decade cannot be met by any governmental program alone although such programs are an essential framework in which to operate. Only people can meet this challenge, people who now live inside the communities where the victims of poverty and prejudice live, or people who will go, freely, into those communities, leaving behind on the dresser, the superfluous contents of their intellectual wallets. And unless we meet this challenge, the next ten years will find the country even more divided than it is to-

day, and those ten years may then be known as "The Brutal Decade."

The war against poverty, the fight for civil rights and the struggle to make our communities into healthy living places will not be won by men in government whose commitment to community is diluted by sectional interests, an irrational fear of planning and brute-like prejudices. It is commitment that distinguishes man from the brute. Without committed individuals, society will lose; with them, there is the chance, at least, of winning.

David T. Bazelon

Mr. Clapp's Wonderful Book

The House of Representatives represents the worst of us—and that not even fairly. It has been so weirdly malapportioned and fancily financed that we actually end up looking a great deal worse than one was entitled to expect, given a fair roll of the dice. Now who would bother getting all wrought up about a rotten borough here or there, and a few comforting rituals designed to ease the late years of aging public servants, or even a number of unpleasantly imaginative techniques for balancing family budgets? One would turn the problem over to a current Mencken, and to hell with it! But that is not the situation. The situation is that three hundred years

or more of immigration, other geographical passion, and gorgeously hard and unjust work, has resulted in this somewhat unspeakable democratic institution. I am not at all clear whether Something Can Be Done About It, but I am certain that many more people are going to have to understand what is going on up there On-the-Hill: that activity was designed to be, on the most profound cultural level, the democratic essence of the whole American idea.

The quickest way to lay a stethoscope on the heart of the House is to imagine a true parliamentary system, and then compare. This approach, in-

cidentally, goes all the way back to Woodrow Wilson's *Congressional Government* published in 1885; his deep penetration of the theoretical problem undoubtedly contributed in a decisive way to his magnificent performance in actually putting together an *ad hoc* parliamentary system during the first two years of his administration. And he did not have the kind of crisis working for him that FDR did; all he had was the opportunity presented by a shaken-up and therefore politically confused situation, on which he imposed a temporary order by virtue of intellectual power and main force of will.

The weird power structure of the House derives from the *absence* of coherent party control, especially on the part of the Democrats. (The Republicans don't need more of a party than they now have: what would they do with it?) This absence begins in the districts.

Very simply, most congressmen, being in business for themselves, put together personally based coalitions in their districts, where the party often enough does not exist except in a formal sense. They therefore do not answer to party discipline when they arrive in Washington: they do not owe their election to a national party. The irresponsible trading mess which has resulted is the logical result of the non-existence of the Democratic party at the root-level. The cure is equally obvious: creation and re-institution of the party caucus in the House, not as a substitute for the seniority system but as an effective overlay—Otto Passman and Judge Smith are told what and when, or out. The corrupt bargain with the Southerners is fully renego-

tiated—from the Northern view, the price fixed long ago is way out of line. This effort cannot be accomplished quietly on the inside. It is necessary to go back to the districts and begin at the beginning. This used to be understood as “democracy”: the understanding should be revived.

Certainly most people who read excessively have noticed that the subject *What-is-Congress-and-what-can-we-do-about-it?* is leaping to the front of intellectual concern. And not a moment too soon. Because it will be noticed, upon reflection, that since the New Deal ended in 1938 there has been no significant domestic reform and no purposeful increase in Federal fiscal effect (which would itself be a reform and which all other reforms require) that was not occasioned or excused by a foreign policy or military need—or, thinking of the current Tax Triumph, not just plain wrong. We have had no really innovative domestic policy executed by the Federal government in a quarter of a century. Not only the New Deal but all positive domestic effort on the national level ended in 1938. Granted the good faith of the Executive, it ended in Congress. So people are starting to be concerned about Congress, and are spending less time in dreaming about a perfect genius of a President who can save them from their own history. The assassination of President Kennedy has accelerated this process. I suggest he was our last good fantasy.

All of which brings political science to the front of the lecture hall. If Mr. Clapp's book* is a fair sample, I'm

* *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It*, by Charles L. Clapp. The Brookings Institution, 452 pp., \$6.00.

all for it. It is a marvelous piece of work, a perfect triumph of suggestive fact-gathering and arranging. What he did, under the strained auspices of The Brookings Institution, was carefully to select and set up two panels of Congressmen, Republicans over here, Democrats over there, and to record the ensuing talk which ranged over all aspects of congressional life and business. He even wrapped up the project with a luncheon for the wives, to make sure nothing had been overlooked. The casting (something under twenty each for both parties) did not include the bosses, which again shrewdly carried forward the opportunities for candor. The wonderfully suggestive quotations with which the volume is filled are not ascribed to named participants; but these are identified at the beginning of the book. The two biggest men in the congressional scheme of things included here were the two most important sub-leaders—top aspirants (at the time) for the speakership within the next decade, Richard Bolling and Gerald Ford. The book was several years in preparation, with follow-up interviews and a manuscript conference as late as 1963; but the basic work was done in 1959 with members of the 86th Congress—the famous Class of '58, plus postgraduate members.

The book is, literally, *all* quotes. It is strangely similar to the *Statistical Abstract* (for purposes of social analysis, my favorite volume after *Notes from Underground* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*), with the difference that suggestive personal quotations are substituted for suggestive public numbers. Lest this remark frighten off any potential readers, I

hasten to add that Mr. Clapp's connective and summary tissue is both solid and valuable. The slyly matter-of-fact tone—with only very rare tidbits of noticeable irony—does not hurt, although it is hardly a wondrous help in working one's way through the volume. This book is not to be read as a narrative argument, but to be day-dreamed and speculated over. And highly recommended for this purpose.*

Here are a few tasties from Mr. Clapp's choice offering:

- "Time after time we go on the floor, not knowing anything about the subjects to be discussed."

- The advantages of attending debates on the floor anyway are indicated at pp. 122–3. They are an opportunity to chat with colleagues, and this added bonus: "Many bills which are essentially the same come up year after year; House attendance helps you acquire the background of basic legislation."

- "The big miracle is that somehow all of this works." (The miracle has shrunk.)

- A Republican—"the committee selection system is pure and simple government by crony."

* I am guessing that academic work in political science is on a more acceptable level than that in standard college-teacher economics. Why? Because poli-sci never got close enough to the cash register, where all piety begins. And also because, compared to money and business, the subject itself—that is, the government of the United States of America—was never important enough to attract the meddlesome interest of the trustees. Until recently, of course; and now, hopefully, it may be too late to put the poli-sci departments through the same spiritual meat-grinder.

• A late-fifties phrase of consequence: "that decision was reached at the Texas level."

• The Rayburn-Martin Rule: "Vote your district first."

• Which leads to a Democrat saying "all this talk about caucus is just a dream anyway. The Democrats are so deeply split in philosophy that they cannot encourage anything which might divide them even more."

• "A Congressman is the shortest distance between two years."

• On non-political politics: "You can slip up on the blind side of people during an off-year and get in much more effective campaigning than you can when you are in the actual campaign."

• "I don't think votes mean a thing"—referring not to ours, of course, but his.

After reading this wonderful book, I have two practical suggestions: 1) support all possible counterpart-fund junkets wholeheartedly—these guys desperately need a chance to get away; and 2) don't just write your congressman—send him money, so that he can buy his way out.

One wonders how Mr. Clapp ever managed to collect such offerings of candor. Read with sensitivity, *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It* is, all unknowingly or not, a hair-raising scream of pain from them to us.

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Michael Walzer

THE ONLY REVOLUTION

Notes on the Theory of Modernization

I

Historical concepts always tell us as much about the men who use them as about the events they are supposed to describe. Very little is given in intellectual life; artists, writers, even social scientists must choose the way they wish to see the world and invariably they choose ideas which suit their needs or convenience. American social scientists use the concept "modernization" first of all for reasons of convenience: it groups together all the complex transformations now going on in Africa and Asia and it suggests useful comparisons with similar transformations presumed to have occurred at one time or another in Europe. Modernization is thought to be a single, long-term historical process in which all mankind is destined to participate, but in which some men already have participated. Their experience provides the basis for a theory about the stages, crises and turning points of the modernizing process, and about the character of its active agents and still vigorous opponents.

Exciting work has been done with this conceptual scheme, but the concept has serious difficulties and these have seldom been treated analytically.* Nor has anyone suggested that there may be reasons beyond

* This essay does not pretend to examine in detail the large number of books and articles in which the theory of modernization is used more or less systematically, nor the larger number in which its terminology is vaguely employed. My purpose is to suggest some of the intellectual tendencies fostered by the theory and already visible in those books (by Daniel Lerner, W. W. Rostow, S. M. Lipset, Gabriel Almond, etc.) in which it has been most ably developed. The academic theorists disagree among themselves and the criticisms which follow by no means apply equally to all of them. But modernization, in theory as in reality, has acquired a momentum of its own; its terms inevitably have come to have meanings for which its creators are not entirely responsible—though those meanings more often than not are true to the logic of the theory. (It should be said that a critique of the theory has been begun by Professor Wilbert Moore in his book *Social Change*.)

scientific utility for its extraordinary popularity. One such reason is probably that modernization theory forecloses a great deal of political debate. Even the casual use of words like "backward" or "developmental process" suggests forcefully that the direction of historical change is not at issue. Modernization theory thus opens the way for a social science as self-confident as was the historiography of nineteenth-century Whigs. American academicians seem as certain as were Whig historians that their contemporary world is the modern world, and the modern the very best world there has ever been.

"Modern" has become a term of self-congratulation; it is a way men have of indicating those aspects of the present in which they take special pride and by which they distinguish their own cultural, political or technological achievements from those of previous generations. It is not really a historical, let alone a scientific, word at all; it is a word, so to speak, with built-in naiveté, the characteristic naiveté of contemporary writers who make the modern and familiar into something super-historical.

When social scientists accept this prideful evaluation of contemporary life, they cut themselves off from historical understanding. Their theory then fails to do what a theory of history and society ought to do: to suggest possible or likely connections between the past and future. "Modernization" is by definition a terminal process; it culminates in modernity. It suggests connections only between the historical past and the unhistorical present, the conventionally admitted world around us.

The theory of modernization appears in an earlier form as Weber's "rationalization"—a process culminating in a "rational-legal" society. Rational-legal and modern are terms very similar in meaning, but Weber avoided the word which his followers have chosen, perhaps because he realized the instability of the social system he was describing. Acutely aware of the discomforts of rational-legal civilization, he sensed that there would be future transformations. He warned of revolutions led by charismatic men, calling into question all the achievements of human rationality. But the American social scientists who write of modernization live wholeheartedly in the midst of the modern. Like Hegel in the Prussian state, though with a more catholic sense of human destiny, they view their own achievement as the culmination of historical development. Theirs is a theory of progress, but of *progress realized*. Unlike the eighteenth-century French doctrine, it does not point beyond the present. "Modern" men decline to speculate on their future, but absorb themselves instead with their heroic and painful past—confident that masses of men in other parts of the world are now re-enacting that past.

Complacently they wait for their straining, backward fellows, as if they had no more history of their own to act out.

II

Marxist theory was constructed around the notion of two revolutions: one had already occurred when Marx wrote, though not yet in all countries; one had not yet occurred in any country. These two revolutions linked three stages of human history: feudal, capitalist and socialist. The theory of modernization, by contrast, rests on the idea of a single revolution which has already occurred in some but not yet in all countries. This revolution links two historical stages: traditional and modern. The current doctrine, then, represents a major act of intellectual reduction, an act not without some empirical justification. For no country has had more than one revolution, or at any rate, no country has had two revolutions which can usefully be described as bourgeois and proletarian. Marxist writers have struggled to explain why it is that "proletarian" revolutions have occurred only in countries which have never had "bourgeois" revolutions. Theorists of modernization have no trouble in avoiding this difficulty, for in effect they argue that only one revolution is ever to be expected. That revolution marks the final crisis of the old order: a vanguard of modern men bursts through the trammels of tradition and establishes the new society. Because of the complex processes through which ideology and technology are imitated and diffused, however, this crisis occurs at different times in different countries and draws different groups of men into its vortex—businessmen, factory workers, peasants. The character of the emergent society will be determined by the point in economic development at which the crisis takes place and by the social classes which respond to its turmoil. That society can be *either* capitalist or socialist.

Modernization theorists (here following Weber) tend to deny that there are significant differences between capitalism and socialism. The two are equally the products of the revolution against traditional order. Their sociological and psychological foundations are thought to be identical. They both require, for example, the same work-ethic: thus recent writers have rediscovered Weber's Puritanism among the Bolsheviks. They both foster the conjugal family and shatter the ties of extended kinship systems. As against traditional passivity, they both generate mass activism and participation (though neither requires that that participation be meaningful or democratic). They both depend for efficiency upon an impersonal and bureaucratic rationality.

Marxist writers were not, of course, blind to these aspects of social

life, but they did center their analysis upon the ownership of property, an issue which now seems secondary. For them, feudalism and capitalism, where property was privately owned, seemed more closely related to each other than either was to socialism, where private property was abolished. In other areas as well, however, socialism was thought to involve significant transformations precisely of modern, that is, bourgeois life. Socialist writers, for example, foresaw the transformation of work into a kind of play or, at any rate, into esthetic creativity; they thought the Protestant work ethic with its overtones of compulsion characteristic only of capitalist society. They looked forward to changes in the conjugal family, for the household with all the inhibitions it placed upon the freedom of women had clearly survived the breakup of the extended kinship system. And so on: they wrote also of changes in the character of political participation; they advocated the radical decentralization and simplification of bureaucratic structures. Yet none of this is integrally connected with socialism in modernization theory—nor, it need hardly be said, in the modern world as we know it. According to our theorists, all these proposals are merely the utopian effervescence of the crisis period, quickly enough forgotten when the time comes for socialists to take over governments and begin the hard but rewarding work of modernization. The theory thus predicts the failure of socialist aspiration insofar as it points beyond the modern world, even while admitting the possible success of socialism as a modernizing ideology.

Once again, there is historical justification for this view. The two forms of contemporary socialism can both be accommodated better by modernization theory than by Marxism. Social-democracy (in, for example, its Scandinavian form) seems indeed a modern social system, far closer to welfare state capitalism than to the Marxist vision. Similarly, Bolshevism is probably best described as a modernizing ideology, its adherents driven to act out that repressive and disciplinary role currently thought necessary to social progress. And the society which the Bolsheviks have produced certainly bears striking resemblances to that modern world which has emerged in the West—there also without the benefit of a second revolution. Socialists, in fact, have not anywhere produced societies conforming to their own aspirations. In the name of progress and of that efficiency and bureaucratic rationality which progress seems to require, they have set aside one by one precisely those purposes whose achievement would have resulted in a radically new form of modernity and would also have required major changes in the theory of modernization.

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If such changes are not required by anything which has yet hap-

pened, however, one can at least insist that they may yet be required. The aspirations expressed during the "crisis" period are indeed not fulfilled by modernity; but neither are they abolished. For this reason, the Marxist writer has one decisive advantage over the academic theorist of modernization. He is unalterably committed, living as he always does *before* the second revolution, to search in his own society for those "contradictions" in social, economic and political life which are manifest in human discontent. He quickly becomes aware of the way in which historical problems, like those seemingly outmoded social classes in Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, accumulate through time. He discovers the unevenness of historical change and senses the troubles of the men left behind. Most importantly, perhaps, he understands how historical unevenness fixes group interests and social structures into patterns of conflict which are extremely difficult to overcome. And he sets this over-all view of society against the possibilities which the future holds and towards which the aspirations of actual men point. Now, none of these insights are in any way unavailable to the theorist of modernization *so long as* he studies premodern societies or societies which are in some sense in transition towards modernity. The theory of the single revolution, however, commits the social scientist who holds it to view the problems of "rising expectations" or historical unevenness as susceptible to definitive solution through the completion of the modernization process. As that process nears completion, he tends to talk of "areas" of backwardness and "pockets" of discontent and then to call for political or economic "mopping up." He is singularly blind to the anxieties and frustrations which seem endemic precisely in the "modern" life he unquestioningly accepts and which are the result, in part, of that very failure of socialist aspiration which he claims to understand. And he surely does not see the way in which the structure of modernity, like any other structure, may become an impediment to further progressive transformations.

III

A theory with one revolution is a theory with one revolution too few. However useful it is in explaining the past, it fails to alert the men who use it to that which is transient in the present. But there is another difficulty in modernization theory: *it fails to provide any very interesting means of distinguishing among different presents.* All sorts of distinctions, some rather obvious and some very subtle, can be made among societies which are on their way to modernity, but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that modernity itself is singular in form. Moderni-

zation theory, then, lies behind the widely shared view that the United States and the Soviet Union are evolving towards one another and eventually will develop very similar social systems. This is a view which suits men of different political persuasions: it can provide the basis for arguments about Soviet liberalization or incipient American totalitarianism. The bias of the theory, however, would appear to favor a forecast of Soviet liberalization, both because the idea of the modern has been shaped in the image of Western experience, and because the Russians being less recently modern presumably have further to evolve.

If Bolshevism is seen as a modernizing ideology, then Russian totalitarianism can be described as an institutionalized arrangement appropriate to a certain stage in the modernization process. Such a description has a certain plausibility, especially if one ignores or de-emphasizes the purges of Stalin's time which seem without historical "appropriateness." Alternatively, totalitarianism, with the purges, can be conceived as a "disease" to which nations are peculiarly susceptible during the crisis period—a view which justifies efforts to prevent the disease and has therefore been favored by American writers. Now either of these views represents an advance over the cold war conception of the Soviet system as permanent and monolithic evil. Both of them provide a historical framework within which totalitarianism can be better understood than it has been until now. At the same time, however, both of them do us (and the Russians) the acute disservice of suggesting that the future of Soviet society is somehow not a problem (only the past is a problem): the modernizing process will go on; the disease of Stalinism will be shaken off and the patient brought to a condition which, it is assumed, will be healthy simply because it will be modern.

Of course, totalitarianism is bound to be transformed as the historical process of which it is the product, proceeds. The question is, transformed in what way? All processes arrive and are always arriving at the modern, but this is always a particular modern, determined by its history. Not even the spread of a single technology or the increasing interrelatedness of the various divisions of mankind seems likely to produce in the near future a single history and a singular modernity. We will continue to live in significantly different societies. And for the moment, at least, it is useful to argue that some of these societies will be totalitarian. That word need not retain its apocalyptic overtones; its use is only to suggest, in the language of modernization theory, that while the "crisis" may be comparatively brief, the particular ways in which it is met have lasting effects.

Eighteenth-century theories of progress were characterized by a

curious notion that the past might be abolished: each new advance in science or politics not only overcame the obstacles which older men had erected, but literally annulled the darkness in which they had lived. So men continually escaped the consequences of their own history. Something of this odd notion survives in modernization theory: at a certain point in the process of development, it is thought, men loose themselves from their parochial pasts and, after one or another sort of social trauma, enter a universal present. There is some truth to this, perhaps, if it is expressed with sufficient caution. The immediate past is more parochial, the present more universal, chiefly because of the worldwide diffusion of ideas and artifacts, itself an aspect of modernization. But this very diffusion evokes from each country a particular response, leads to a special form of social unevenness and eventually to a distinct political creed and a cherished independence. The first result of diffusion is to increase the number of sovereign states, the number of arenas in which political decisions are made. And insofar as parties and politicians make different decisions, they or their descendants will find themselves living in different worlds. This remains true even after one admits that the range of choices is not always wide and that the word "choice" does not always indicate debate and deliberation.

The Russian people thus are likely to endure their modernizing party as an inescapable incubus for years to come, long after its presumed historical function has been fulfilled. Soviet modernity does not depend first upon the activity of the party and then upon its withering away. Instead, the party creates a particular form of modernity, a form to which it is itself integral and not incidental. Similarly, the Western experience of Puritan repression and bourgeois egotism is not simply one pathway into the modern world. Repression and egotism gives rise to modern capitalism and are to an extent embodied in their own creation. They form the ever-present past and become our own incubi when we struggle to adjust to (or deny) the possibilities of abundance and automation. Neither the institutional structures of individualism nor the Communist party, of course, are necessary parts of modernity. On the other hand, one cannot discover the essence of modern life by excluding them from one's conceptual scheme. That excludes too much: modernity always appears in particular historical forms, in which Americans and Russians, Chinese and Indians struggle with the past, adjust to it, evade and endure it, but never escape it. When modernity is turned into a sociologist's ideal type, it suggests that impossible escape and then does not provide any clear way to analyze or understand the particular forms

of the modern—where the encounter with the parochial past is as essential as is the universal present.

IV

These criticisms of modernization theory apparently have more relevance in the “advanced” than in the “backward” countries. The nearer one is to the fully realized modern, the more disturbing is the idea that radical social change is a thing of the past. The theory is most successful in explaining the experience of backwardness, that is, the new awareness of men living in traditional societies that they are in some sense “behind” and must quickly “catch up.” Indeed, the major purpose of the theory is to facilitate the business of catching up. Large numbers of American social scientists have suddenly become defenders of social change—in the backward countries. They have developed a healthy sensitivity to the human misery upon which traditionalism rests. They approach the problems of development with a lively pragmatism which is often appealing. There is a “job-to-be-done” air about modernization theory and the theorists may well feel that the pressure of poverty and hunger are so great that there is no time for complicated analyses of modernity. Somber warnings about the inescapability of the past—and especially of that past which is being made today—must sound to them like superfluous moralizing. The activity of the modernizers requires a goal which can be assumed; modern life must appear as attractive as it is inevitable. Then the human price for rapid social change will be gladly paid; all costs must seem worthwhile if modernity itself is the purchase.

Most American social scientists, of course, do not believe that all costs are justified; they study modernization at least in part to learn how coercion can be minimized and totalitarian terror avoided. Thus they have tended to see modernization as a process whose *means* require further study and debate, but whose *ends* are given. In fact, however, the givenness of ends limits and inhibits the debate over means. Given the character of contemporary backwardness *and the character of contemporary modernity*, it is probably correct to argue that modernizing regimes will always be authoritarian and their methods always coercive, if not terroristic. All debate is then reduced to questions like, how authoritarian? how coercive? But this reduction is only necessary if the model of modernity imitated in the backward countries is not itself subject to change and if there is only one possible end to the developmental process. *The alternatives in the backward countries depend upon the alternatives in the advanced countries.*

In theory, at least, a thoroughgoing critique of the modern world would offer men everywhere a wider range of choices. It is in this sense that the criticisms suggested above are relevant even to the politicians and economic planners in Asia and Africa who are "doing the job." So much of what they call modern is already outmoded, vestigial, inadequate to human needs! With automation so near a prospect, for example, how necessary to the job they are doing is the discipline of a "Protestant" work ethic? Or again, now that decentralization is technically more feasible than ever before, how necessary to that job is the creation of a bureaucratic hierarchy? So long as modernity is conceived in a singular and narrowly contemporary image, with "Protestant" workers and a centralized bureaucracy part of that image, there is only one historical pathway and it culminates in the American present—or in that immediate future which Khrushchev promises the Russians. Presumably men must struggle along that pathway as quickly and with as little pain as possible, and since the end is preordained, theorists can only distinguish between forced marches and voluntary advance. If, by contrast, modernity is seen as having a multitude of forms then there are a multitude of paths, and all sorts of choices to be made and opportunities seized.

But contemporary social scientists seem unwilling to confront the modern world in a critical way. They are content to view social problems as functions of backwardness and to offer modernization as a single cure. Thus they become social critics and even revolutionaries—abroad—out of sympathy for their fellow men, in a good cause, and with admirable energy and skill. If only modernization offered some solution to the problems of the modern! And if only these men were revolutionaries at home!

LETTERS FROM MISSISSIPPI *continued from page 372*

I wanted to tell my hostess all of this in a tone that would leave her believing that I, a reasonable man, had come to this state and quickly seen the error of my prejudgments. But I couldn't: my tact wasn't great enough to dictate a courteous explanation of the fact that this state is actually worse than anything I had anticipated. I could more easily accept atrocities that took place in the swamps and woods—in precivilized surroundings—and were inflicted by rural red-necks who bore no resemblance to people whom I had known in the North, than I can accept the daily harassments and threats that every Negro here receives at factories, gas stations, and hotels: places which, for me, fall into the familiar context of American life.

My hostess was undoubtedly a good person, and I was eager to establish a friendship with her. But as she talked of her Mississippi I kept thinking of the state familiar to the young Negroes I teach at our freedom school: a world light years removed from her carefully decorated ranchhouse, and her excellent steak dinner.

She had told me that not every Mississippian was a barefooted redneck, and I knew she was right. Wearing shoes and a comfortable collar, a gas station owner several blocks away had fired one of the young Negroes who attend our school, and had apparently been privy to nightly threats on the student's life. I tried to mention this incident to my hostess, but the barrier of perception between us was too great to permit reasonable conversation. "I know the man you're talking about," she said. "He's one of the lower class people around here, and they're always harsh with Negroes." But was there really so great a distance between the fellow townsmen? My hostess' husband planned to vote for Barry Goldwater, the candidate who would restore small businessmen like the gas station owner to their proper place as American citizens. Both husband and wife undoubtedly ate, without much discomfort, at restaurants which had refused to serve Negroes weeks after the Civil Rights act passed. If we developed this point the distance between our attitudes would become too great to bridge; so we went on to another subject.

By Mississippi standards it had been a good conversation: each of us had learned something from the other. Yet we both knew that we could never become friends, at least not this summer. Too much history stood between us. She called herself American and so did I; undoubtedly we derived similar pleasure from the same songs, books, movies, and jobs. But in her state, whenever I pause for a moment to reflect

on the history of a particular person or acre, I cannot help but feel like a depressed and confused alien, and wonder whose land I am really in.

PAUL COWAN

A few statistics show how the Panola County voter situation has changed in the last two months. At the end of May, only 30 Panola Negroes were registered to vote. Today, with the help of the Circuit Court injunction on the Registrar, more than 500 Negroes are registered. In the last two weeks alone, 207 Negroes—or nearly 3% of the Negroes in Panola County have gone to the courthouse to register.

The Batesville office sports a skeleton staff now. Most of the 14 Panola County workers have moved to nearby communities—tiny villages like Sardis and Como and Crenshaw and Crowder. Our goal is to build up local leadership in every hamlet of Panola County; the bulk of our effort has shifted from canvassing to organizing.

The Freedom Democratic Party provided a rationale for tight local organization. To challenge the legitimacy of the regular Mississippi delegates it was necessary to mirror their organization exactly, to hold precinct, county, district and state conventions and to select delegates and alternates at every level. The experience also is giving Mississippi Negroes a quick, intense political education.

In Batesville, for example, we suggested a block by block organization. Two of the teachers agreed to find about a dozen energetic people who would like to serve as block captains. They visited each of their nominees, talked Batesville and politics with them, explained what was needed, and asked them to serve. They had no difficulty finding 15 potentially strong leaders.

Eight of the block captains came to the first meeting—three teachers, a farmer, two local merchants, a minister, and a hair stylist. Most of them already understood about the convention challenge, but we discussed it again, this time emphasizing the importance of local leadership, the selection of delegates, and the adoption of resolutions.

The concept of a platform fascinated the block captains. For almost an hour they discussed their problems—haltingly at first, then with some ease—until at last they had listed a dozen key problems and a series of possible remedies.

There are no street lights, paved roads, fireplugs, or sewage lines in the Negro section of Batesville, for example. They asked that these facilities be provided without prejudice. Local industries, like the hosiery manufacturing company, have unfair hiring practices and unfair wage scales. They asked for fair employment practices. They also asked for

better school facilities, a Negro policeman, and a rest room downtown. Before adjourning they decided to form a permanent organization to meet every week.

A similar group of leaders has organized in the nearby farming community of Macedonia. They have had similar results except that 24 people came to their first meeting, and their resolutions were more concerned with farm problems like acreage allotments and a minimum wage for sharecroppers. They held their second meeting last night; the 35 people who participated decided to organize on a permanent basis as a political unit which will hold weekly discussions and be responsible for voter registration and mass meetings in the farm area around Macedonia.

Voter leagues like those in Batesville and Macedonia—which are being organized in virtually every section of Panola County—will function in conjunction with local junior voters' leagues, whose members will continue to canvass and to help lead mass meetings after we leave. There are already more than 200 junior voters' league members throughout the county, and in many cases they serve to stimulate their elders.

One day last week we met with the moderate local newspaper editor and the State Senator from Panola County. The Senator, a mild fellow with deep dimples, made a prophecy. If the Negroes in Mississippi register, he predicted, they will elect uneducated Negro officials—all the good white citizens will then leave the state, and Mississippi will be a jungle of incompetence.

We told him that we too are concerned about educating Negro voters and we described our project. He was impressed but unconvinced. Even if we succeeded in building a responsible political machine, he explained, moderate white politicians could never appeal for their support. In fact, if it were known that I met with you today, he said to illustrate his point, it might injure my political career.

The Jackson newspapers this morning list the senator as a member of the Mississippi Legislative Committee to investigate communism in the civil rights movement. I was reminded of Roy Wilkins' suggestion at the March on Washington that the civil rights movement may free as many whites as it will Negroes.

The political system we're helping to build in Panola County and in Mississippi may fail. It may crumble from within or be crushed from without. But it is an experiment which must be tried. At worst it will leave a residue of politically educated Negroes.

Yours,

L. GEOFFREY COWAN

Martin Oppenheimer

THE PEACE RESEARCH GAME

Within the past decade a group of "New Civilian Militarists" has arisen to supply the Establishment with some natural and social scientific armor—Teller, Kahn, Kissinger, many others. Slowly a counterforce to the NCM has been growing on the American campus, too. The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and the Society for Social Responsibility in Science were among the first to move in this direction. Now the body of social scientists concerned with the prevention of war has become respected and relatively sizable, so much so that many have voiced a fear at its overly rapid institutionalization and absorption by the very Establishment it criticizes.

There are more than 100 institutions in the U.S. doing research related to peace and disarmament. They range from the U.S. Naval Ordnance Test Station at China Lake, California, to privately sponsored groups such as the University of Michigan Center for Research on Conflict Resolution (and its *Journal of Conflict Resolution*). One of the key figures in this development, economist Kenneth Boulding, has termed it a "peace research movement." Boulding and other social scientists, notably economist Emile Benoit, management engineer Seymour Melman, sociologist

Amitain Etzioni, and psychologists Charles Osgood and Erich Fromm, have assumed increasingly important roles in the peace movement because of their writings and their participation in such academic groups as the Councils for Correspondence.

The Peace Research Movement has to a certain degree become a vested interest because foundation and government funds are involved. This has created an informal but nevertheless useful counterweight in government circles to the New Civilian Militarists and their more saber-rattling allies. But some negative consequences, too, follow from the Peace Research Movement's presently respectable status. Peace research output, based as it is on the present academic establishment (both for its theoretical roots and its financial support), shares the assumptions of that establishment. Most social scientists in this country tend to see society as a functioning whole, beset from time to time by minor dysfunctions. Hence social change is viewed as a series of minor adjustments, and not as a dynamic historical process. Since no basic structural change is envisioned, the instruments of such change, namely masses of people, do not play much of a role in the analyses of most peace researchers. Rather, the dominant con-

cern is with influencing the status quo and its present decision-makers, both East and West. Even when the masses are subjected to study, as in public opinion work, it is with a view to seeing how their opinions can be brought to bear on decision-makers, rather than how they can be brought to intervene themselves, as people.

This has led the vast bulk of present peace research to focus upon three problems: decision-making of elites (including the effects of public opinion on this process), communication between elites (including some national character studies), and the construction of utopian models (formal and mathematical or adapted to such purposes as planning economic alternatives to arms production). The replacement of present elites, the elimination of basic problems which give rise to international "misunderstandings," and the processes by which societies get to the point where the models might work are generally not considered.

Glancing through the pages of one of the chief organs of peace research, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, one runs across research concluding that "legislators with economic or personal ties to the other country are more likely to be responsive to the needs of the other country than are legislators lacking those ties." Presumably, therefore, in order to improve the techniques of crisis control (rather than resolve the causes of crisis) all the K's should intermarry. This might be termed the "beyond the hot-line" theory of conflict control. Another study falling into the same school suggests a formula by which we may analyze a foreign gov-

ernment's policy statements for their hostility content. When they get too hostile we can take appropriate steps to reduce the hostility, the assumption here, as elsewhere, being that hostility is due to misunderstanding or misjudgment. The *Journal* is filled with elaborate mathematical models based on game theory (used by peace and "war" researchers alike) to analyze such phenomena as the number of war dead related to the number of frontiers and the density of population along them; or the results of escalation under conditions where one nation attacks another in order to get it to attack a third, the probability of which "if the necessary information is available and the assumptions are satisfied," is

$$E(X_k^{lm+}) = \sum_{j=1}^N (R^m)_{ij} \quad r_{jk} = (R^{m+})_{ik}$$

"It is therefore imperative," concludes the model-maker, "that constructive alternatives to deterrence through retaliation be found," a point not exactly startling in originality.

The psychologists of the peace research movement are primarily interested in communications-perceptions problems. Charles Osgood, perhaps the leading spokesman for peace-research-oriented psychologists, has summarized the problem as he sees it: "Surely, it would be a tragedy, a cause for cosmic irony, if two of the most civilized nations on this earth were to drive each other to their mutual destruction because of their mutually threatening conceptions of each other—without ever testing the validity of those conceptions." So it is conceptions which have created the cold war! Osgood believes, apparently, that if

the conceptions were tested they would be proven false, and, in happy understanding, the two "civilized" power blocs, now enlightened, would live happily ever after. But suppose the "conceptions" turn out to be accurate? What then?

Osgood's contribution to peace theory (see his essay in *The Liberal Papers*) is termed Graduated Reciprocation in Tension Reduction, which is a fancy way of saying unilateral initiatives. With his program one cannot quarrel very much. It is his assumptions about the nature of the cold war, and the increasing popularity of these assumptions, that give one pause. These theories take up a good deal of the time of peace researchers. In the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* one writer recently put it this way: "Clearly, as long as decision-makers on either side of the Cold War adhere to rigid images of the other party, there is little likelihood that even genuine 'bids' [note the gamesmanship terminology—M.O.] to decrease tensions will have the desired effect." True enough, but is it images that create tensions, or are tensions created by other factors, and reinforced by images? Shall we treat symptoms, or causes? Another *Journal* writer, moving into the tricky field of national character, suggests, "If several of the leading nations of the world were to undertake a careful study of their national myths and the extent to which these myths influence policy, the cause of international understanding would be greatly advanced." True again, but this is rather like suggesting to a psychotic that he take hold of himself and look at the world rationally.

This view is, after all, only the other side of the Soviet apologists' line that international exchanges of the Youth Festival type will somehow solve international problems. It has been taken to its conclusion by psychologist Morton Deutsch who, in his presidential address before the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, suggested that peace requires "attitudes which consciously stress mutual acceptance, mutual welfare, mutual strength, mutual interest, and mutual trust." These attitudes are to be generated through UN sponsorship of "a series of periodic international contests which would enable the different nations of the world to reveal their achievements . . ." So a leading spokesman for American social science and peace research recommends (or at least implies) that we cease our criticisms of unpleasant features of other regimes and channel the social, political, and economic drives of imperialism (a word which is very rarely seen in peace research, by the way) by staging olympic games, fairs, and ballet festivals. A discouraging level of analysis indeed.¹

Boulding, Benoit, Melman and Etzioni have succeeded in popularizing another assumption of peace research: that the conversion of the world's war industry to peacetime uses can be accomplished without "serious dislocation, unemployment, or checks to eco-

¹ Henry M. Pachter, in "Amateur Diplomats and the Peace Literature," *Social Research*, (30:95-107), Spring, 1963, makes a similar criticism, but does it from a view that peace researchers don't understand the Russian Menace, and strongly suggests that to be "realistic" one ought to back NATO. Two unrealities, however, do not make a reality.

conomic growth." Melman puts it this way; "... economic conversion under disarmament can be carried off in fine style, especially if reasonable advance planning is done." Etzioni, who is slightly tougher-minded, still basically agrees: "It seems safe to conclude that if we investigate the problems involved and plan ahead for them, the transition to a peacetime economy can be eased . . ."

Models of such a transition are not difficult to construct—see, for instance, Melman's *A Strategy for American Security*, or the U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency's *The Economic and Social Consequences of Disarmament*—particularly if one remembers that most of the peace researchers assume a gradual, staged disarmament lasting upwards of ten years. But there are serious political obstacles. In a recent *New York Times Magazine* article Benoit admitted that a course of economic recovery more oriented towards federal spending for welfare "would encounter serious obstacles. Even in the unlikely event that Congress would approve a doubling of Federal non-defense programs, this would offset only about one-quarter of the probable net cutback in defense expenditures."

It would be foolish to argue that what Benoit believes to be difficult is technically impossible. It is *possible* for government to step in and produce the kinds of goods and services required to make up the difference between defense production and what private enterprise is willing to substitute for it, even adding in the multiplier effect, continuing automation, and a growing labor force coming out of the schools each year. It is *possible*

that the private sector will submit to the degree of planning soon to be required to maintain the economy under present — defense — circumstances, and it is even possible that it will submit to the greater degree of control which will be necessary under disarmament. But it is not probable.³ It would therefore seem that the problem is not so much alternative ways of spending money, but rather methods of achieving the political and social changes which are the prerequisites for making such alternatives operational.

Such a focus, however, would fly in the face of the assumptions of most peace researchers, namely that only minor economic alterations are needed, not major social changes. For them, mass movements are not required (and may even be embarrassing); hence the emphasis on trying to convince the present leadership of the Establishment through lobbying, personal contacts, and "education." At the very moment when the peace organizations of the nation are beginning to recognize the ineffectiveness of pure-and-simple lobbying, at the moment when they are beginning to wet their feet in mass politics—including the labor and civil rights movements—along come the researchers to place the focus of action once again upon the mechanisms of helping the elite adjust the system. We are diverted from attention to the real roots of international conflict, and, with the aid of psychologists, are informed that the only thing stopping disarmament is that the leaders don't understand

² See the fine discussion of this point in Horst Brand, "Disarmament and American Capitalism," *DISSENT* (Summer, 1962).

strategy and don't understand each other.

The peace researchers seem determined to undermine the more traditional radical view, which is that the arms race stems from the inherent socio-economic and political natures of capitalist and Soviet societies, since both of them generate imperialist drives which, when they collide, threaten to break out in violent conflict. This traditional view seems at once clearer, yet more complicated, than the "reformist" views of the peace research groups. It is clearer because it does not bog down in the confusion of elitist decision-making and decision-changing. It is more complicated because it requires a grasp of the underlying dynamics of social systems, and how to change them. And it requires attention to the social forces which are needed to make such changes—the millions of Americans who must be recruited into peace and other movements if those changes are to take place.

There are a few peace researchers who understand this need, and who

argue a more radical position. Mulford Sibley, Sid Lens, and Irving Horowitz have recently contributed to a series, "Beyond Deterrence," published by the American Friends Service Committee. Some of the research reported in the *Newsletter* of the Councils for Correspondence seems to be pointing in a new direction. Radical economists are receiving a wider reading. Criticism of the basic assumptions of peace research is growing. These are hopeful signs. But the chief paradox of the peace research wing of the American peace movement still remains: what is required is a movement concerned with the dynamics of at least political if not yet social change. We are moving in that direction, but very slowly. Perhaps as the civil rights movement becomes more and more involved in the multitude of social problems with which it must deal, the movement of both peace and civil rights forces towards political change will accelerate and intersect. Peace research should be pointing the way. Instead, it drags behind, encumbered by the traditional, static thinking of the academic community.

Arthur I. Waskow

THE PEACE RESEARCH REALITY

All research is intended to provide new answers to problems that are as yet unanswered. Peace research is no exception. But Mr. Oppenheimer already knows all the answers to the problem of how to

create and preserve a stable peace; and therefore peace research is unnecessary. It is only regrettable that he has not yet used his knowledge to achieve the peace we all seek.

If this summary of Oppenheimer

seems unfair, let us make clear what answers he already knows. He already knows that the only way to eliminate war is to eliminate the roots of conflict between nations and to end human exploitation; that only twin revolutions to oust the present elites on both sides of the Cold War can establish peace; that international misperceptions are only symptoms, not causes, of international tension. I do not know how he knows these things. I do know that I do not *know* any of them. Some of them I presently tend to agree with, and some to disagree with. I see "peace research" as the only way of finding out which of them are true.

If Oppenheimer believes that "peace research" today is merely the institutionalized opposite of all his opinions, he is wrong; and he could only have come to such a conclusion by ignoring much of what has been produced by peace researchers. Let me take an example. The Peace Research Institute, during its 24 months of life, produced three documents under its own imprimatur. The three were *The Shelter-Centered Society*, which examined the political dynamics that might be set going by a spiralling civil defense program and warned, pending further research, that these might well result in a totalitarian society; *Quis Custodiet? Controlling the Police in a Disarmed World*, which examined the problem of enforcing disarmament and suggested, pending further research, that a small but highly trained and precisely directed police force might well be able to enforce a disarmament agreement even between powers that were toughly pursuing radically conflicting foreign

policies; and *The Worried Man's Guide to World Peace*, which examined the political and policy problems involved in changing official decisions on peace and war, and proposed a series of guidelines for undertaking and evaluating any sort of social action intended to bring peace. These do not sound to me like viewing social change "as a series of minor adjustments, and not as a dynamic historical process."

Does Oppenheimer want to see peace researchers examine the role of private military industry in shaping official military strategy? Let him talk with Gabriel Kolko. Does he want to study the socio-political problems of shifting from an armed to a disarmed economy? Let him check with Otto Feinstein and Donald Michael. Does he wonder whether peace researchers have dug beneath the assumptions of "game theory" and "strategic" thought to lay bare their ideological preconceptions and their failures as modes of political analysis? Let him read the work of Anatol Rapoport. Does he want to reevaluate the notions of "Western Civilization" and "the Atlantic Community" as the central focus of American policy? Let him talk with Marc Raskin and Richard Barnett. All these men are peace researchers, and none of them takes for granted the philosophical or political assumptions under which any government or Establishment in the world operates.

On the other hand, these men do not think that just because they have refused to be whores of the Establishment they must undergo a shotgun wedding with one or another revolutionary party. Most peace researchers

are not prepared to mouth anyone's slogans. They demand to find out.

What does "finding out" mean in peace research? It is not easy, because the researcher is trying to predict the effects of future large-scale social changes (such as total disarmament or total civil defense) on which he cannot experiment and for which he can find little historical precedent. For this reason, many peace researchers have turned to model-building and analogical research. That is why small-group experiments in bargaining and negotiation have been used to cast some light on behavior at Summit meetings or in national confrontations. That is why "inter-nation simulations" have been carried on, placing a number of men in the roles of presidents, foreign secretaries, and defense ministers of conflicting countries and examining how they respond to a political crisis in an armed, disarmed, or disarming world. That is why historic examples of arms races and trade interruptions have been graphed, and mathematical models of the conflict process developed from the result.

No one in peace research would argue that model-building and small-group research are enough to illuminate the behavior of large institutions; but they may help to generate some hypotheses on the control of conflict and the prevention of violence. Historical research might then support or deny such hypotheses. Thus Kenneth Boulding's hypothesis on the relationship between a steep decline in the cost of delivering violence over a given distance and the shift from a "defense" to a "deterrence" posture

could be checked against historical events like the introduction of gunpowder into Japan. If the hypothesis seemed to be supported, the credibility of other portions of Boulding's hypothesis—perhaps those concerned with the shift from "deterrence" to "disarmament"—would be strengthened.

Even such evidence, of course, would not "prove" the applicability of the hypothesis to our own future. But one might then with considerably higher confidence attempt to construct "action experiments" in which particular small areas of the world would be disarmed according to the principles suggested by the peace research already done. Such "action experiments" would be too dangerous to try (since they would have major effects on the real world) in the absence of considerable evidence that they would work. Once it had been made possible through theoretical, experimental, and historical research to try such "action experiments," experience with them would in turn make it politically and intellectually possible to create new world policies.

That is one possible line of development by which peace research would be made useful. There are many others. What they all have in common is a belief that science is no window dressing for either the ins or the outs, but something truly radical: a way of cutting beneath everyone's accumulated clichés and pieties, and learning how actually to move in a direction one wants to take. Peace research offers the academic man a chance to reunite the split personae of morally involved citizen and dispassionate scholar.

COMMUNICATIONS

Gertrude Ezorski

Ideology and Inconsistency

In a recent essay ("In Defense of Inconsistency" *DISSENT* Spring 1964), the Polish writer Leszek Kolakowski characterizes the consistent man of action as one who is ready to impose his views "by war, by aggression, by provocation, by blackmail, by murder, by intimidation, by terror, by massacre, and by torture." This portrait is calculated to shock us morally and Kolakowski, taking a humanist stance, opts for inconsistency. He praises "the breed of the hesitant and the weak, the breed of the inconsistent."

The problem Kolakowski raises is a familiar one. Those who are bent on socially desirable aims may be forced by circumstance to employ methods that punish the innocent and pinion the helpless. Are idealists justified in inflicting injustice? But the man who is genuinely disturbed by this question should not be calmed by Kolakowski's answer. His views are contradictory, and where not contradictory, they are either false or plainly irrelevant. It is strange to find a philosopher pledging himself to inconsistency. Yet Kolakowski's praise of inconsistency, seen in a political perspective, seems less strange. Many who defended the murderous "excesses" of Stalinism took moral cover under the "principle" that

the end justifies the means. But whatever the merit of the motives that prompted Kolakowski to assume his position, I cannot see that any good can be served by bad arguments.

Kolakowski constructs an unfortunate metaphysic to prop up his praise of inconsistency. "The reality of values is inconsistent, i.e., it is composed of antagonistic elements. These elements cannot all be accepted as true simultaneously; yet each of them demands complete acceptance. This is not a logical contradiction, since values are not theoretical theses. *It is a contradiction inherent in the world of human behavior*" (italics added). But if contradiction is *inherent* in the world of human behavior, it surely follows that a consistent policy of action is impossible. How can one behave consistently if behavior is inherently contradictory? Why does Kolakowski bother to polemicize against consistency when his metaphysical thesis dictates that consistent action can never see the light of day? (The fact that Kolakowski cites examples of consistent action muddles his position even more. According to his metaphysic of behavior, the very cases he cites are ruled out as impossible.) But if one ignores the metaphysical snare Kolakowski unwittingly sets for himself, his target is plain to see. "It

is only thanks to inconsistency that humanity has kept alive on this earth . . . absolute consistency is in practice identical with fanaticism . . . if the antagonists were otherwise animated by a fanatical spirit of consistency, they would just have to keep killing each other off until one side was wiped out."

One gathers from this that the only consistent men who have appeared on the recent political scene are the totalitarians. Who else has systematically murdered off all those who disagree with them? So Kolakowski's praise of inconsistency is a dispraise of totalitarianism, and one can hardly fail to sympathize with the spirit of his polemic. But *has* totalitarianism really been imbued with consistency? It was not merely inconsistent, but plainly insane, for Hitler to order the extermination of skilled Jewish workers during the war, when the labor shortage in Nazi Germany was acute. Stalin's purge of loyal military and technical personnel was hardly consistent with the aim of strengthening his regime, since it weakened Russian industry and military forces. Consistency is, after all, an honorific term and I am not ready to award it to totalitarianism without an inspection of the historical record.

Kolakowski claims that consistency requires wiping out all those who disagree with one's aims. But how can one even consider this thesis without specifying the aim to be achieved? A democratic socialist, interested in the problem of means and ends, will, no doubt, be shocked by Kolakowski's claim, but why should it convince him? It surely does not *follow* from a be-

lief in democratic socialism, that one must *necessarily* favor murdering all who dissent from that belief. Hence there is no *prima facie* inconsistency in rejecting this policy. What Kolakowski must show is that murder of one's opponents is in fact a means to democratic socialism. In that case, rejection of the means would be a form of inconsistency. But Kolakowski offers no evidence to prove that such a policy is a necessary means for the achievement of socialism. Surely, the first problem a socialist should raise is: Would not a regime which systematically murders all dissidents become an obstacle to the development of socialist democracy? Socialists, like all ordinary men interested in practical goals, have to consider whether the consequences of the means they employ will help or hinder their aims. The consequences of our actions may not be easy to estimate. But that problem is made no less difficult by the *a priori* presumption that those who are committed to a given aim must, if they are consistent, murder anyone who dissents.

While Kolakowski declares himself for inconsistency in action, he concedes, in his concluding remarks, that there are "basic human situations" where "perfect consistency" is demanded. In these cases "*tactical considerations cease to be valid*, i.e., situations toward which our moral attitude remains invariable whatever the circumstances. . . . Such basic human situations include clearcut military aggression, genocide, torture, oppression of the helpless" (*italics added*). (Why Kolakowski singles out only those cases where consistency is required as "basic human situations" is a mystery

to me. Earlier in his essay he claimed that the antagonisms which generate inconsistency are "immanent in the world of values." Surely, the situations created by what is "immanent in the world of values," must also be "basic human situations.")

Kolakowski admits that his choice of consistency in basic human situations renders his thesis inconsistent. He does not consistently prefer inconsistency. I have no wish to quarrel with him on that issue. But he seems unaware of the fact that he has made his concept of consistency unintelligible. He first argued that the consistent man is willing to use any means whatsoever to achieve his aims. Yet he now claims that in "basic human situations . . . tactical considerations cease to be valid." Whatever his aims, there are certain means which a consistent man may reject. Having interpreted consistency in action as the willingness to use any means whatsoever, he concludes by characterizing the renunciation of certain means as an exemplification of "perfect consistency!"

The truth of the matter is that, while Kolakowski calls for "perfect consistency in "basic human situations," it is precisely in such situations that consistent action is most difficult. Kolakowski fails to recognize this because he has blurred the distinction between acting on principle and acting to further an aim. To refuse on principle to pursue a course of action is to proclaim any consideration of practical results irrelevant. While to act to further one's aims is to make practical results the deciding criterion. Consider the case of a soldier who is dedicated to the war aims of

his government, but can only obtain crucial military information by torturing a prisoner of war. Kolakowski urges that in such a "basic human situation . . . tactical considerations cease to be valid." The *principle* which forbids the use of torture cannot be violated in any circumstances. Kolakowski's position is a belated implicit recognition that fidelity to a principle, as well as to an aim, is a form of consistency. He is saying that in such a situation one must be consistent with principles and disregard one's aims. But it is precisely here that a principle may be in conflict with an aim. In that case, those who share Kolakowski's humane position will be consistent with their principles but contradict their aims. While those who, hardening their hearts, stick to their aims, will be inconsistent with their principles. Thus the "basic human situations" where Kolakowski thinks one can behave with "perfect consistency" turn out to be the very situations where inconsistency may be unavoidable.

Kolakowski's failure to distinguish acting on principle from acting to advance one's aims has further and no less unhappy consequences. He discovers an antinomy of tolerance which he stamps "eternal and eternally insoluble." "How can we proclaim and practice tolerance toward intolerant opinions and movements? If we reduce to silence such opinions and movements, we act contrary to the principle of tolerance; but we also act contrary to this principle if we tolerate them, since we thus offer them the opportunity to take power and to suppress the practice of tolerance."

However, if one distinguishes toler-

ance as an aim from tolerance as a principle, the "eternal" antinomy disappears. The man who refuses on principle to act in an intolerant fashion places tolerance above any consideration of the consequences. He sees tolerance as a principle to be followed, rather than a goal to be achieved. By taking a principled stand he rules out any consideration of practical results. Hence, he can with utter blind consistency ignore the argument that the consequence of his position is to offer an intolerant group "the opportunity to take power and suppress the practice of tolerance." One may very well question the seriousness of a position taken without regard for the reality of consequences. But whatever the deficiencies of this view, it is certainly not contradictory. Hence, Kolakowski's antinomy of tolerance does not touch this position. On the other hand, the man who regards tolerance as an aim rather than a principle, is committed to those means which would best preserve the practice of tolerance. Sup-

pose he adopts the position that it is necessary to suppress an intolerant group because there is a real danger that it will take power. To argue that he is *necessarily* caught in an inconsistency is like saying that those who relish cold chicken necessarily contradict themselves because they must first heat the chicken by cooking it, in order to eat it cold. The significant problem for those who face the danger of a growing intolerant movement is the effect of suppression on their goal: i.e., the preservation of tolerance as a social practice. Hence, they should be duly aware of the traces that are left by any infringement of freedom: the creation of dangerous precedents, and the development of habits of political suppression. They must be sensitive to the concrete interdependence of ends and means. But those who engage in this difficult and delicate weighing of empirical considerations will get no help at all from the eternal animosity of tolerance that is conjured up by Kolakowski.

BOOKS

Current Styles in Muckraking

The recent revival of social criticism in America ought to be welcomed, of course. But social criticism is too easily separated from the rest of the political process; one notices in the responses to the new muckraking books a tendency to regard them as symbols of accomplishment, as if discussion were the same thing as reform. The reality may in fact be quite different, for a heavy cynicism seems to afflict American politics, suggesting that it is quite possible for institutions to survive unadorned by the myths or ideologies formerly attached to them and once thought necessary for their preservation. Nevertheless, effective muckraking is more needed than ever; for as the important questions of public policy have become more complex and remote from everyday experience, journalism has come to play a larger role in our political life. But journalism has not operated in its traditional way, remarked upon by de Tocqueville, to initiate direct association among like-minded people; it has, instead, given us a picture of the world that calls forth a concerted response—if at all—only indirectly, at elections or in public opinion polls.

The value of muckraking that does more than supplement newspapers is illustrated by a book that sets out to correct deceptive ideas rather than to present previously unknown facts, Ber-

nard Nossiter's *The Mythmakers* (Houghton-Mifflin, \$4.00). This book deals clearly with the most widely believed set of myths, those purporting to explain economic affairs in terms of balanced budgets and supposed inflationary menaces, or promoting a false notion of "neutrality" in labor-management disputes. It will be difficult for Nossiter's readers to view presidential interventions in threatened strikes with the simple trust in appearances that newspaper reports seem to demand, for he takes up the steel price case and shows, quite simply by calling attention to the sequence of important events, that the purpose of President Kennedy's mispublicized intervention was to strengthen his hand in urging restraint on the unions, and that this purpose stemmed from a mistaken view of the need for such anti-inflationary action. Similarly, Nossiter argues, with great clarity and concision, that the Kennedy administration was actively friendly to business; his evidence includes, in addition to the steel case, the administration's tax and trade bills, and its use of military expenditures as an economic stimulant.

Nossiter is particularly good at ridiculing the idea that business practices have improved significantly because managements have become more responsive to public opinion. "The in-

stitutional literature emitted by business," he argues, disguises the dominant role of non-competitive large corporations, the increasing concentration of assets, and the calculation of prices according to a "target rate of return." He makes use of academic studies and Congressional reports to show that this pricing procedure means that many great corporations predetermine their rate of profit on the basis of an average volume of sales and probably don't lower their prices when sales fall. The business conscience, whose theoretical advent was so widely announced a few years ago, is, in practice, a mite beneath detection; here the grandiose claims of business schools are tellingly contrasted with the actual practices of managers when it comes to price-fixing and their own remuneration. And, although the book carries an admiring preface by J. K. Galbraith, Nossiter has a number of appropriately harsh things to say about the doctrine of countervailing power, in the course of which he summarizes the important evidence for believing that neither unions nor retail units effectively "countervail" against corporate pricing and profit decisions.

Nossiter's remedial proposals center on a system of indicative planning, akin to that which operates in France. Its purpose would be chiefly to promote a higher rate of economic growth, which our failure to achieve he carefully isolates as the main cause of present unemployment. These proposals, disappointing when compared with the force of their author's attack on present economic policies, have the additional, and usual, demerit of seeming incapable of achievement by present political means.

A book by one of the best of liberal Congressmen, Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, makes one wonder further whether the current definitions of Congressional issues give much ground for hope of economic reform. In *The Critical Decade: An Economic Policy for America and the Free World* (McGraw-Hill, \$5.50), Congressman Reuss offers brave slogans ("we must become once again, not a chosen people, but a *choosing* people"), and demonstrates that he has a firm grasp of the details of legislation; but he does not bring these details into a fruitfully close conjunction with the slogans.

The flavor of Reuss's many proposals is usefully represented by his discussion of improved monetary mechanisms. For deficits in the balance of payments, he offers some familiar liberal remedies. These amount, first, to applying diplomatic pressure abroad (in order to lower foreign interest rates, for example), and, secondly, to stimulating the domestic growth rate (by demand-creating measures). He points out that it makes little sense to correct the American deficit without touching the chaotic state of international monetary practices. His basic idea, not notably ambitious, is to supplement the existing reserves available to meet demands on particular currencies by (a) accepting a Congressional committee proposal that would have the major Western powers lend specified amounts to the International Monetary Fund for the purpose of relieving deficits among themselves, and (b) adding to this fund by requiring countries with surpluses to grant a certain amount of credit to deficit countries.

Throughout, Reuss's approach fol-

lows a similar pattern: he identifies a problem (foreign aid, low growth rate, Common Market competition, unemployment, incoherence in tariff structures), gives a brief account of its background (largely in terms of the administrative defects of the institutions created to deal with it), states various alternatives that seem practical (i.e., that stand a chance of appealing to Congress and to business managers), and, in the manner of a campaign platform, endorses a suitable course of action. His rhetoric takes into account a national interest that is defined mostly in terms of the efficient management of aggregate resources; while he acknowledges qualitative standards, he seems to shroud them in legal paper. The book will probably have some unobjectionable consequences if it reaches the businessmen most directly affected by its proposals—after all, who benefits from muddle?—and it may help to promote an alliance of liberal Democrats and enlightened managers. Yet, quite apart from specific flaws in his program (his monetary proposals, for example, have only a peripheral bearing on the enormous foreign exchange problems of the poor countries), one gets no sense that Reuss sees any way of convincing a large audience that his practical notions are worth supporting because they serve a greater political good. It all sounds like the Fabian Society in its moments of statist enthusiasms, but reveals little of that group's hostility to preordained private economic power.

Edgar May's *The Wasted Americans* (Harper and Row, \$4.50) is not only more certainly in the muckraking tra-

dition, but has more to do with the purposes of politics, for it is about what the state does for and to the poor through its welfare programs.

In 1960 May worked in the Welfare Department of Buffalo, initially in order to gather material for a series of newspaper articles. However, he says, "the fake-caseworker role wore off in the early weeks," and he conceived his book as "an attempt to get Americans excited about a large group of their fellow citizens who are unknown to some and who may have been overlooked by others." Perhaps because some crusading books on poverty have been criticized for their inattention to statistical data, May has attempted to weave such information into his argument, along with references to his own experiences, a history of the attacks on welfare in Newburgh, N.Y., accounts of bureaucratic procedures and structures in various parts of the country, a discussion of the contraception-information dispute, and a few excerpts from tape-recorded conversations with relief recipients and officials. (The tape transcripts are good enough to suggest that interview-studies of North Americans would be as interesting as Oscar Lewis's books about Mexicans.) The facts are lucidly stated, although May has tried too hard to be "interesting" in the manner of reporters.

Much of the material supplements one's vague conviction that welfare procedures are cruel, intrusive, and rational only in the manner of the officials of *The Castle*. "It took twenty-four separate pieces of paper to give one of my relief recipients her first check." The Erie County Department of Welfare has a Monthly Budget

Schedule that provides, for example, that a boy 13-17 years old in a household of two is allowed \$42.40 for food prepared in the home; a girl in similar circumstances gets \$36.50 according to this splendidly precise calculation. Efficiency? May says that a study of ADC families showed that "in seven states more than half the families were getting the wrong amount of assistance."

One of the important things to emerge from May's book, perhaps unintentionally, is the strangely ambiguous role of the social workers. Surrogates to the poor for a society that contaminates pity with censure, social-workers try to mold the contradictory aspects of their function into a bearable way of life with the aid of an elaborate professional mystique. But one wonders whether May hasn't been led afield in his consideration of positive proposals by the socialworkers' own explanations of themselves, for it would seem to be inherently impossible that a profession be recognized with appropriate trust as both spokesman for the poor and supervisory delegation to them. May's ideas are good; it would be silly to object to better reporting of welfare activities, and we do need bigger welfare budgets, vocational training program, more social workers, and perhaps even the teaching of home economics to bad housekeepers. But all these serve mainly as sensible aspects of an unambitious program that suits the current national style and softens difficult conflicts of interest; worthwhile as it is, that program seems to perpetuate the dole in dependence on ambition's ethic. Nevertheless, May has performed a valuable service in assembling accurate in-

formation about the most significant of welfare state services, and in his story of the Newburgh affair has presented a timely reminder of the cruelty of purportedly conservative movements.

Philip M. Stern, in *The Great Treasury Raid* (Random House, \$5.95), apparently intends to let us see the Internal Revenue Code as a model of our economy's weird structure. It's hard to suppose that it escaped Stern that his exposure of the tax law's irrationality reveals as well the steel web of corporate power. Yet at the end he recommends what is, in effect, merely a simplified tax law of universal application. He recognizes the difficulty of establishing his "no-preference tax system," but his overt appeal is to abstract principles of consistency and formal equality of treatment, and he affects to believe that obscure language is the major obstacle to reform. His covert argument, however, is that the tax laws operate in dozens of intricate ways to favor business executives, corporations, organized landowners, technical specialists in paper manipulation and, in general, anyone who counts with the legislating coalition of tax experts, Congressmen, and profiteers. It's the argument that's covert, however, and not the facts; one does no violence to Stern's revelations to conclude that the general rule is that the less direct the connection between the taxpayer's own efforts and his income, the greater will be the profit allowed to him.

Stern's salient merits are to cover the field thoroughly and, I think, accurately, while emphasizing the operation of the law in specific instances.

In seventeen chapters with such titles as "Ah, To Be an Oil Man," "Living High at the Taxpayers' Expense," and "How to Get Rich Quick in Real Estate—With Uncle Sam's Help," Stern combines summaries of tax court and administrative decisions with statistics, hypothetical cases, and mock-serious advice on how to avoid taxes. The effect is to convey the influence of the law on economic behavior of the most complexly useless sort. One learns, for instance, of the fantastic possibilities of creating "tax shelters" in real estate manipulation, and of the many stratagems available for the perpetuation of great fortunes. The latter include the confident device of the generation-skipping trust, whereby a benefactor of great wealth might bestow the *income* from a \$3 million trust on his children and grandchildren. "At the grandchildren's death, the \$3 million itself would pass to the great-grandchildren. . . . The tax savings (assuming the \$3 million passes, each time, to an only child); \$622,000 by skipping one generation, nearly a million by skipping two generations."

Nor does Stern pretend that such measures, which permit tax avoidance behind a facade of high taxation, are merely accidental defects in some impartial grand design. He makes it clear that both the "favored few" (stockholders, owners of municipal bonds, etc.) and the "favored many" (old people, the blind, homeowners, veterans) are served by political calculation. In one instance, remarkable chiefly because it is so clearly demonstrable, a special section of the tax law was passed to save money for the odious Louis B. Mayer. Stern's chapter on this gives the law, a "layman's

translation," and a brief history of the amendment, which was presented to the Senate Finance Committee "by Mr. Mayer's lawyer, Ellsworth C. Alvord, appearing not in his capacity as a private attorney but as the official spokesman of the United States Chamber of Commerce." Mayer saved about \$2 million; and "there are dozens of other statutes which seem clearly fashioned for a lone taxpayer known only to himself, his attorney (or lobbyist) and the lawmaker who favored him by sponsoring his made-to-order provision."

The defects of *The Great Treasury Raid* stem from the excess of Stern's passion for good taxation; he really wants the Treasury to accumulate the largest possible sums in the most consistent possible way. His claim that the IRS ought to have more agents is disagreeably typical of his viewpoint, and his insistence on equating tax exemptions of varying effects and motives leads him to suspect even the most innocuous of special privileges, such as the one for elderly people. So dedicated is he to the Treasury's interests, in fact, that one wonders whether some of his readers might not be encouraged to lend their resentment to the wrong cause, by vicarious participation in privilege rather than through redress in fair taxation. And since the important question is, after all, the way in which tax policy should contribute to a sensible economic and social policy, it is not enlightening to conclude with splashes of rhetoric about being better off "with a free play of market forces" and the suggestion that the tax laws aren't as important as people think.

The Naked Society, by Vance Pack-

ard (McKay, \$5.95), doesn't go much beyond newspaper clippings about invasions of privacy; the 342 pages of this book amount to a miscellany of shocking facts concerning those impersonal forces that frighten comfortable middle-class families with the threat of physical and psychological manipulation. According to Packard, there are "five forces undermining our privacy": (1) population increase and urbanization, (2) the cold war, (3) the increase in leisure, growth of the mass media, and increased corporate obsessions with secrecy, which are said to be due to affluence, (4) the proliferation of businesses pursuing "investigation" for profit and often owned by former government agents, (5) technological advances in spying equipment. On points (4) and (5) Packard has unfamiliar information. He tells us, for example, of the Wackenhut Corporation, "the fourth largest investigative and security organization in the nation, with a staff of 3500, complete with a lie-detector division," and he gives an estimate of the cost of eavesdropping apparatus ("Picture frame transmitter, \$15").

The best sections are those which describe credit checks, lie-detector interrogations, and corporate spying on job applicants. The worst are those on bureaucratic harassment, police brutality, and "mind manipulation," in all of which Packard either fails to give pertinent examples of the relevant abuses or confuses pointless cruelties, such as the legal punishment of homosexuals, with, say, health regulations on the keeping of goats in New York City. The real trouble with Packard's book is that it deals with its symbolic material on a conventional literal

level. "Any company that hopes to be known as a decent place to work should completely eliminate lie detectors," Packard says, but his real message is the old one of Babbittish cynicism: trust no one, for there is no decency.

Packard's tone and content often recall such Riesman-oriented exposes of the fifties as *The Organization Man*; two books about the military are more precisely topical. The first of these, John M. Swomley, Jr.'s *The Military Establishment* (Beacon, \$6.00), is partly a history of conscription, the peacetime enactment of which the author ascribes to a long campaign by military men, and partly a general attack on military power. Swomley supplies an abundance of detail, but the information he gives—based largely on newspaper reports and Congressional documents—doesn't prove his conspiracy theory, since he seems to regard effects as self-evident proofs of causes. He says, for example, that cost-plus defense contracts permit corporations to include advertising as a business expense, which is interesting, but then he confuses the matter by vaguely hinting that such benefits induce the press to favor the military. The point might well be overlooked if it were incidental, or it might be worth making in a context of tighter argument. However, most of Swomley's argument is built up out of such items. Swomley's intentions are good, but his pacifism leads him to find almost any fact about the military to be shocking; his book consequently depends too much on raw data, unmediated by an argument that meets non-pacifist opinions, for it to have much persuasive impact on non-believers.

Tristram Coffin, in *The Passion of the Hawks* (Macmillan, \$5.95), defers not at all to military pretense, but avoids pacifist absolutism. Where Swomley appeals vaguely to the political standard of "the kind of civilian government envisioned by our founding fathers," while apparently assuming that all military endeavor is morally untouchable, Coffin invokes moral values that can be linked to personality, and he accomplishes this by commenting on political policies mainly as they are exemplified by specific individuals. He starts, in a sense, with what Swomley excludes, for he finds that "The real enigma is, What has happened to the American objection to a huge military establishment?" His answer is vague, but he gives us a sense of the soldier's mentality and of the setting in which it operates, as well as a notion of the realities of power politics. In a chapter on General MacArthur ("King Mac"), and in a discussion of the military academies, he explores the military caste system and observes that it often fails within its own terms, since it produces men who are "excellent in strutting, posing, and phrasing," but whose "genius is scant" in the coarser business for which they have been trained at considerable public expense—killing, maiming, and crushing an enemy. This sort of bald statement of the military function is central to Coffin's persuasive strategy; he hurls tough-wise maxims ("Man is the bloodiest of the beasts . . .") and he surveys the nation's military history with broad strokes of a rhetoric that forces one to recognize the complex interaction of military means and political ends. It may be an oversimplification to say "The Civil War smashed

like the blundering breath of a hurricane the concept of a small standing army, for the Union had no force to put down armed rebellion," but the idea is more helpful to understanding than are the moralizing notions of so many other anti-military polemicists.

To a considerable extent, then, Coffin convinces because he attempts to counterbalance military propaganda rather than to suggest that we don't need a military establishment of any kind. For one thing, he doesn't deny the dangerous existence of Russian armed force; he has, in fact, a chilling section on the Soviet army and its probable impact on Russian foreign policy. Those who are looking for detailed, documented information won't get it from Coffin; his book is basically an extended essay in support of a reasonable suspicion of military claims. Yet he does make sense out of headlines about Pentagon influences that work in three major ways: through a Congressional-military alliance, which he pins down with an appalling list of Senators and Representatives who have been given military titles and privileges (Keating is a Brigadier General in the Army reserve, Goldwater a Major General in the Air Force); through direct intervention in politics (he describes the Air Force campaign against Senator Margaret Chase Smith); and through the "military-industrial complex." It's no small accomplishment that Coffin uses the last phrase for genuinely effective polemical purposes by expanding on his basic definition of it as "a crew" of "military contractors, generals, public-relations scalawags . . . and a general riff-raff of local Chamber of Commerce secretaries, lawyers, and the like."

Do these six books, which may be taken to represent current styles in muckraking, have anything in common? All of their authors would probably call themselves "liberals," and they are all clearly dissatisfied with the state of American society; we have come a long way from the days of the American Celebration. They are all markedly uneasy about their audiences, however, and this becomes most evident in their remedial proposals, which are, without exception, devoid of visionary promise. It is as if these writers, having begun their books with the certainty that hidden truth, once exposed, would set free a collective sense of responsibility, had gradually come to believe half-consciously that such a sense either did not exist, or could not translate itself into effective action. In the main, two ways of coping with this state of mind have been adopted: either the author addresses himself to administrative reforms of a narrowly pragmatic nature, or he discerns in the problems with which he has been concerned an aspect of publicity (or myth or obscurity or bad reporting). Both of these attacks are often accompanied by a rather unconvincing search for supporting statements of value: administrative reforms are recommended, as a rule, in "social" terms, for their efficiency, while publicity solutions are loosely tied to "personal" qualities of good citizenship, understanding, or even, in the case of Vance Packard, good parenthood (a child should have his own room, he says, in a tone suggesting that this is suppressed information). None of these authors is conspicuously in favor of egalitarian, or anti-capitalist, or socialist, or anarchist radicalism of any kind, and few pay

much attention to what has been done in other countries, for better or worse, to deal with analogous problems.

Both the administrative and the publicity approaches partake of the fashionable anti-populism of the past decade in a curious way. They take up neglected problems, oppose conventional banalities, and challenge powerful forces; but they neither invite nor expect the actual participation of those they are addressing. Their presumptive audiences, moreover, do not include those whose interests are directly affected in a simple sense, nor is it suggested that readers will directly confront the subjects or objects of discourse: the poor are dealt with by social workers, we encounter taxes through paper forms, the military operate on a grand scale, and counter-myths about economics do not seem to touch either the nature of work or the commercial values of our culture. In short, these writers seem to be enlisting the support of a liberal, middle-class audience for policies that are to be carried out by existing elites. (The elites themselves are already in favor of many of these policies.)

There is nothing grievously wrong with this approach, which is emotionally based on an understandable reaction against both messianic ideologies and politically passive anti-ideologies (except that it leaves much by default to conservative agitation). Yet it is worth noticing that many of the characteristics of the new social criticism seem to be based upon a series of tacit assumptions regarding the relation of journalism to politics. These assumptions, in brief, are that journalism (whatever its medium) is a major part of the electoral system; that we act

upon one another politically by silently choosing opinions which are at once formed by and expressed through journalism; that journalism-politics does not so much either promote or destroy association as short-circuit it. These assumptions naturally issue in administrative and publicity remedies because they operate at the level of images rather than of social actions or ideas. If journalism and politics largely over-

lap, then a change in journalistic images becomes a change in political reality. If much of politics is as abstract as all that, then the combination of a change in imagery with adjustments in the administrative structure is all that can be expected and modest proposals are the substance of protest. Beyond that the new muckrakers do not go.

PAUL BRESLOW

Two Views of the World Scene

ON DEALING WITH THE COMMUNIST WORLD, by George F. Kennan. New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1964. \$3.00.

WINNING WITHOUT WAR, by Amitai Etzioni. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1964. \$4.95.

With his customary precision, forcefulness, and expository elegance, George Kennan outlines here the elements of rational American foreign policy toward the Communist world. Not that there is much new in these pages; Kennan and others have argued along similar lines before; but in these days of Goldwater ascendancy it is nevertheless important that what he has to say be reiterated again and again.

In his first chapter, "The Rationale of Coexistence," Kennan argues that "a great and important body of opinion in this country—and a growing one, I fear," is prepared to reject "every possibility other than the most relentless and embittered and uncompromising struggle [against Communism], and to pursue a policy which

. . . could lead only, and with inexorable logic, to the final and irreparable disaster which is in all our minds." This viewpoint, Kennan asserts, is so strong in Congress, in certain segments of Washington officialdom, and in vast sections of the country at large, that it tends at times to cancel out the wholly different policy the executive branch is prepared to follow.

In fact, we have today two contradictory foreign policies pursued simultaneously. One policy strives to lay down the basis for a permanent coexistence with the Communist world. The other asks, "Why not victory?" One attempts to secure a long-range and flexible policy toward the separate nations of the Communist world; the

other thinks in terms of a violent and short-term disposal of the Soviet problem, and views the Communist world in terms of a monolithic unity which has in fact not existed for a considerable time. Those who prattle of victory despair of living with Communist power and seek only its destruction. This policy, Kennan argues, was utterly untenable long before the atomic bomb; it has become catastrophic since.

In a second chapter on "East-West Trade," Kennan attacks the prevalent idea that maintenance of an economic blockade against the Communist countries of Eastern Europe can harm them in any serious way. The significance of export controls, he argues, has lain more in the subjective satisfactions they have afforded American public opinion than in any objective effect they may have had. And yet, increased trade might be highly advantageous to both sides. For example, a long-range deal in wheat would be mutually satisfactory. Both the Russian shortage and the American surplus are the results of irrational agricultural policies pursued by both sides for ideological reasons. Under these circumstances, says Kennan somewhat sardonically, "the United States, by selling its wheat, would make it possible for the Russians to go on giving their farmers inadequate incentives for the production of grain; they, by purchasing it, would make it possible for the United States to go on giving its own farmers too much."

An economic blockade would make sense only if Western Europe would be prepared to join it. But this is not the case. We do about \$200 million worth of trade with the entire Soviet

bloc per year, while Western Europe does something like \$5 billion, twenty-five times as much. Under these circumstances, Kennan suggests, we might at least stop nagging our allies about trade with the Soviet bloc, since this is not going to accomplish much in any case. This would permit Western Europe to conduct an experiment in increased trade which American obsessions about "trading with an enemy" prevent us for the moment from trying.

In his concluding chapter, Kennan attempts to come to grips with the new polycentrism of the Communist world. He argues that the unity of the Soviet bloc never fully recovered from the Yugoslav defection. Had Tito started something like a counterrevolution, the effect on the bloc would have been less drastic than his policy of maintaining a basically Communist regime while rejecting the discipline of Moscow. A defection to the capitalist camp by a renegade would have been comparatively easy to digest, but a heresy that obstinately clung to the major goals of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy created permanent damage to the monolithic orthodoxy of the Soviet bloc. Tito suggested that one could be a perfectly good Communist without taking orders from Moscow. Since then the unified and disciplined bloc of Stalin's days has disintegrated into an uneasy alliance between two ideologically related groupings: one centered around China, the other around the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia, in addition, is not being embraced in either of these alliances, and Albania, while allied with China, still belongs to the Warsaw Pact.

Individual Communist countries now

have a far wider range of choice in their relations with the non-Communist world than was the case a few years ago. They also have considerably more freedom to shape their internal institutions and policies than they possessed in the past. Earlier there was only one model; now the Soviet, the Polish, the Yugoslav, the Chinese model compete. Both Moscow and Peking court the satellites, and they can hence no longer effectively discipline them to the same degree as in the past. The Communist world is now so highly differentiated that the global term "Communist" has lost a large part of its validity. The West might now, ideally speaking, influence by its own behavior the choices that the satellite regimes make. But our clinging to policies not basically changed from the days when the goal was containment of a monolithic Communist power puts us into a poor position to encourage a further development of polycentrism. In the nineteenth century, Kennan concludes, the colonial mother-countries alienated millions of people in the colonial world through lack of imagination and feeling toward those who were in their power. "There is, surely, a danger lest history record that Westerners of the twentieth century alienated just as many more through lack of imagination and feeling toward those who were in the power of their ideological adversaries."

One need not agree with everything Kennan has to say. For example, a certain note of frustrated bitterness, perhaps connected with his recent experiences as ambassador to Yugoslavia, sometimes creeps into Kennan's pages, and projects a more pessimistic view of American policy than the facts sug-

gest. But in any case this small book is a genuinely wise contribution to the continuing debate about the goals and means of American foreign policy in the sixties.

Would that I could be equally positive about Etzioni's book. A professor of sociology at Columbia University, he is clearly on the side of the angels. But good intentions may still produce a mediocre work. Much of Etzioni's book consists simply of another survey, and a rather superficial one, of the current world scene. The author clearly has not had the time or the energy to study in any depth the many issues he discusses, and so we get once more a tedious recounting of the failures of containment and deterrence, of the emergence of China and France as autonomous world powers, etc.

The general conclusion that Etzioni seems to draw from his survey is that the bipolar world of the recent past is likely to give way to an increasingly pluralistic universe, but that Soviet and Western thinking is still fixated upon the bipolar state of the fifties. Etzioni urges therefore a new strategy that would focus on interests and responsibilities that the two camps have in common. More particularly, he urges that they mutually accept a set of rules under which their global contentions might be carried out with less danger.

Etzioni's most specific suggestion concerns what he calls "remote deterrence." By this he means an agreement between both sides that they refrain from shipping arms and armed force, overtly or covertly, into non-aligned areas and that they prevent their allies from sending such forces. This

would amount to an agreement that non-Communist Asia and Africa as well as Latin America be treated as Austria is treated now. Remote deterrence would prevent armed interbloc confrontations in third countries and, furthermore, "once armed intervention is ruled out, they [third countries] would need much smaller military establishments," and hence foreign aid could be channeled into development and modernization. Finally, "... with the reduction of armed forces, government use of them to impose its rule on the political opposition ... would be curtailed," and popular revolutions against oppressive regimes would hence be easier to carry out. A most appealing picture. But what are its chances of realization? I fear that they are nil, and that this grand proposal is but a poorly thought-out gimmick. The Russians are at the present

engaged in a fateful contention with the Chinese for hegemony in the world Communist movement. Were they to come to an agreement with the U.S. along Etzioni's lines, they would, of course, be accused by the Chinese of having abandoned solidarity with the Communist movements of the world, of having sold out to America. Etzioni's proposal amounts to telling the Russians that it is in their interest to give up their long ideological tradition of helping revolutions in other countries and to throw the last vestiges of the Leninist world view overboard. Are the Russians likely to be interested in what Etzioni reckons to be in their interest?

I have high respect for Etzioni's more technical works. This superficial book, catchy title and all, however, does not add to his reputation.

LEWIS COSER

The Modern Form of Drama

METATHEATRE: A NEW VIEW OF DRAMATIC FORM, by Lionel Abel, New York: Hill and Wang, 146 pp., \$1.45 (paper) or \$3.95 (cloth).

Heretofore most theorists of high drama have usually offered us this choice: Sophocles or Shakespeare. Critics who all their lives had pondered the Greek and French classical tragedies failed to comprehend the greatness of Shakespeare; and those whose bent was toward his drama, wrongly interpreted the Greeks. The failure on both sides was no accident. For though the divergence of

the two forms was there for all to see, yet criteria and standards derived from long study of the one were continually being applied to the other. In particular cases, the critic's preference could be explained in terms of the European philosophical-literary tradition versus the Anglo-American; or, rationalist versus empiricist; or, idealist versus positivist. The young Georg Lukacs, arguing for Greek tragedy,

seriously put forth the hope that critics and public alike might abandon Shakespeare in favor of Corneille and Racine; on the far other side, I. A. Richards applied the term "pseudo-tragedies," "near-tragedies," to the Greeks when compared to the six plays of Shakespeare he deemed to be true tragedies.

It is Lionel Abel's achievement, in the theory of drama he presents in his book *Metatheatre*, to have shown that the old alternative Sophocles/Shakespeare is a false one. By concrete example he demonstrates that if we refrain from imposing upon either form the standards which can measure only the other, we are able to understand both; and he describes for us in a fresh way the modern form of drama, which he calls metatheatre, from its beginnings in Calderón and Shakespeare to its contemporary embodiment in Brecht, Genet, and Beckett. Yet all this, however interesting and important, might still not warrant discussion of Mr. Abel's book in these pages were it not for the fact that such an achievement is of more than merely literary concern. For the aesthetic concepts of any significant theory of high drama enter into the domain of ethics and—if the term is understood in its broad sense—of politics.

From Nietzsche on, European philosopher-critics have interpreted high drama as the literary expression of a moral philosophy, seeking in their examination of this literature to derive the actual conditions of man's authenticity; or, in the older term, of his moral autonomy. These critics have seen the tragic hero as the representative of absolute values, pitted

against a world in which only compromise and cunning could guarantee survival. The hero's role was to choose to sacrifice his life for these values, and his was regarded as the authentic moral choice, even though it might deprive him both of a personal future and vindication in the court of history. The future and history were for the others, who had secured their survival by inauthentic moral choice. Such, in brief outline, is the theory of tragedy held, for example, by the young Lukacs and which indeed may be traced to Nietzsche. Its defect lies in its insistence on repudiating all tragedy that does not fit its peculiar scheme, and repudiating such other works not through an aesthetic but a moral evaluation. I might say that this makes me wonder whether Georg Lukacs, for example, after almost six decades and forty volumes of writings on the subject of Literature and Aesthetics, has ever really been interested in literature. But I hasten to assure the academic critics that in spite of—maybe because of—Lukacs' paramount moral concerns, his incidental insights into the problems of literature have amounted to a far greater contribution than that of the literati whose sole concern has been literature.

But if we, on our part, reject the idea that a theory of high drama must be the literary expression of a positive moral philosophy, which in the guise of a critique of tragedy is mainly concerned to define the conditions of man's authenticity; if we require, instead, a theory whose judgments are not extraneous but germane to the dramatic literary forms it is examining—then such a theory must first

of all answer the question: what *are* the forms of high drama? Such a theory would also suggest—but not explicitly state—the answer to the further question: what are the ethical implications of these dramatic forms which, after all, were invented by men seeking to understand their world. Lionel Abel, in his book, answers the first question; and he leaves it to his readers to interpret—or misinterpret!—the implications of his theory for an answer to the second.



The question of dramatic forms is answered by Mr. Abel when he redefines tragedy, and offers us a new name, metatheatre, for significant drama that is not tragedy. The essential movements of tragedy he analyzes in the two Oedipus plays: the destruction of the tragic hero, in *King Oedipus*; and, after his enduring this destruction, the hero's becoming divine, a daemon, in *Oedipus at Colonus*. It is *hubris* in the character which has brought tragedy about. The fault of *hubris* moves the hero to act as if he were already a daemon and invulnerable, as if he had undergone tragedy when in fact it still awaits him. *Hubris* Mr. Abel defines as a "claim to a certain kind of divinity which may or may not be granted," and he clarifies this view by consideration of further examples. Interpreting the *Antigone* of Sophocles he sees it as the encounter of the true daemon Antigone with the false daemon Creon, merely a pathetic character. *Macbeth* he holds to be Shakespeare's only true tragedy, in which the true daemon Macbeth encounters Macduff, made a true daemon by Macbeth's murder of

his wife and children. Finally, in Racine's *Athalie*, we are shown how the daemon Athalie is even more uncompromising in her slaughter of David's descendants than the Old Testament God, her Opponent, in his destruction of the posterity of Ahab.

In contradistinction to the daemonism by which the tragic hero is possessed, the protagonist of metatheatre possesses simply self-consciousness. But a gain in consciousness, according to Mr. Abel, implies a loss in the reality of the object of consciousness—in the reality, that is, of the world. Illusion and reality then intermix, become confused. The defeat of the tragic hero points up the reality of the world, but the protagonist of metatheatre can suffer no decisive defeat, therefore the belief in the reality of the world is affected. From this, Mr. Abel derives his two basic postulates of metatheatre: Life is a dream (the title of a Calderón play); and, All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players (from *As You Like It*).

Now I happen to agree with Mr. Abel's conclusions, with these two fundamental postulates of metatheatre, but I find his argument unconvincing. Perhaps one may point to certain philosophers and poets whose intense self-consciousness casts doubt on the reality outside themselves; still, a gain in consciousness does not necessarily imply such doubt of the world. It seems to me a peculiar, an anemic, concept of self-consciousness that does not have for one of its components precisely a relation to the world. The philosophers that we know of who have claimed that the existence of an external world demands proof would,

I suspect, be ducking cars when they cross the street and not something unreal seen by them as blobs of color. Philosophers may talk with the learned, but in their spontaneous behavior they act with the vulgar. And in the theatre—here Mr. Abel might agree with me—our spontaneous behavior and response are affected, and not our epistemological or metaphysical theories. At the meeting reported in the *Symposium*, Socrates is not being ironical when he tells his friends that three days before, while watching Agathon's play, he was not one of the wise.

Mr. Abel further argues that the characters of metatheatre are the inventions of the playwright's imagination, not plucked by him out of the real world; or, if they were found, they were in myth or legend, in literature of the past, and already pre-dramatized: thus, unlike the possessed heroes of tragedy, they are aware of their own theatricality. Hamlet and Tartuffe, two of the great exemplars of metatheatre, Mr. Abel describes as playwrights even, figures capable of dramatizing other characters as actors and with the power to make other situations dramatic beside the ones they originally appeared in.

Here again I would question Mr. Abel's argument. I am not sure that he can establish a firm distinction between tragedy and metatheatre on the ground that fantasy and imagination are central to the latter, whereas they operate in the former merely to reflect the structure of the real world. It seems to me not very illuminating to say, as Mr. Abel does, that we can believe the events in *Macbeth* took place in some sense in which we can-

not believe in the reality of the events in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Are not tragedy and metatheatre products of the imagination, and if the characters of metatheatre are to be found by the playwright in past literature, were not the plots of Attic tragedy found in myth, in legend, in older literature? I for one find the events of that paradigm of all tragedy, *King Oedipus*, no more believable than any event in a piece of metatheatre. And lest I be accused of throwing everything to metatheatre, I must add that it was Sainte-Beuve who called the plot of *King Oedipus* "*une histoire à dormir debout*"—a cock and bull story.

Here I am led to suggest that it may indeed be time for a redefinition, once again, of realism and literary verisimilitude. After criticizing Ibsen for combining the kind of realism he found in the European novel with the necessitarian structure of fated events that he found in Greek tragedy, Mr. Abel says: "Tragedy gives by far the stronger sense of the reality of the world. Metatheatre gives by far the stronger sense that the world is a projection of human consciousness." But was it not *metatheatre* which precisely the great realist, Balzac, gave us in his *Comédie Humaine*, an imaginative projection of a "reality" that could not be observed or experienced? "Let us return to reality" he is supposed to have said when, during the revolution, he sat down at his desk to work, and the phrase, it seems to me, points up the gross misconception of realism current, and which Mr. Abel appears to accept. Returning to his desk, the realist Balzac was

doing exactly what Ulrich, a character in Robert Musil's novel *The Man Without Qualities*, said he would like to do if he had the government of the world in his hands: abolish reality.

Seen from this perspective, contemporary literary forms are not too far removed from their realistic precursors. And does not the narrower distinction of Mr. Abel's metatheatre break down? Does not the characterization of metatheatre fit even the so-called realistic vision of the world which he denies to it, and other forms of literary work which, I suppose, he would not allow to come in under his category? He summarizes the values and disvalues of tragedy and metatheatre:

Tragedy, from the point of view of metatheatre, is our dream of the real. Metatheatre, from the point of view of tragedy, is as real as our dreams.

But what literature could *not* be denoted by this definition of metatheatre?

Later on he says:

Tragedy makes human existence more vivid by showing its vulnerability to fate. Metatheatre makes human existence more dreamlike by showing that fate can be overcome.

Tragedy tries to mediate between the world and man. Tragedy wants to be on both sides. Metatheatre assumes there is no world except that created by human striving, human imagination.

Tragedy cannot operate without the assumption of an ultimate order. For metatheatre, order is something continually improvised by men.

I repeat again: what is stated here about metatheatre could, it seems to

me, equally well be said of many other forms of art and literature.

All this, however, does not diminish Mr. Abel's contribution in demonstrating for us the truth of his primary distinction between tragedy and what he has chosen to call metatheatre. That the heroes of tragedy with their implacable values have been replaced by metatheatre's self-conscious protagonists, molded by the skeptical-liberal Western imagination which has rejected implacable values, Mr. Abel amply proves in his analysis of *Hamlet* and *Life is a Dream*, and in his interpretation of Genet, Beckett and Brecht. In all these pieces of metatheatre we can indeed see that "Life is a dream," and "All the world's a stage." His two basic postulates stand firm.

•

The world, Mr. Abel writes in criticizing the idea of Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd*, "can no more become absurd than it can sin, starve, or fall down." Rather, as he says in his essay on *Hamlet*, "none of us, no matter what our situation, really knows the form of the plot he is in," and he makes the point that Hamlet himself was the first theatrical figure to give full expression to this fact. But if we do not know the form of the plot we are in, if we do not know the kind of a play we are in, we also do not know the plot of history. However, if we neither know the plot of history nor are acting in that plot, then politics cannot have a central place in our lives, and from this it follows that great literature cannot validly be the expression of either a moral philosophy or a politics that

exhorts us to some positive course. As Mr. Abel says:

Any play written at a certain depth should have some other aim than to suggest social change or moral reform. The contemplative imagination can and does delight in what moral and practical wisdom urges us to reject. We are all more profound than our purposes seem to indicate. And the playwright who ventures to touch us very deeply ought to know that he is touching a part of us which is irrelevant to the achievement of our most rational goals.

Elsewhere Mr. Abel remarks that if Beckett had known who the enemy of his protagonists was, he would have written "works with a thesis, not pieces of metatheatre." Clearly Mr. Abel rejects from the concerns of lit-

erature any special pleading on the part of politics or ethics. Yet, surely, ethical and political concerns have a profundity of their own. In his essay *The Myth of Metatheatre*, Mr. Abel has created the figure of a young Athenian named Orestes, who failed to avenge the death of his father, murdered by his mother and her lover. Obsessed with his failure, he has allowed his life to become an empty dream in which the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus is the only reality. He captures Aeschylus and says to him:

Aeschylus, you must change the ending of your play. Since I did not kill my mother and can do so now only in imagination, since my real life now consists only in your work, you must make the end of your play as terrible as the beginning. I want to see myself die by torture. Do this for me, and you will have given meaning and worth, on certain occasions—when the *Oresteia* is shown—to an otherwise empty life.

Now, if ethics only admonished, and politics only propagandized, if their force were exhausted in this, we could condemn Orestes as a weakling who yearns for the charm of literature to console him in his helplessness; he desires literature to be his escape, his ideology. But is it not hard for us to be deaf to the *cri de coeur* of the young Athenian? For are we not all of us, in the political context of our world, weaklings? Literature can become, for anyone who wishes it to be, not an escape, but the very expression of a personal despair, the expression, in the end, of a morality and a politics which, on their deepest level, must surely involve us all.

LAURENT STERN

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A Cold War Warrior Who Cracked

JAMES FORRESTAL: A STUDY IN PERSONALITY, POLITICS AND POLICY, by Arnold A. Rogow, New York: Macmillan Company, 1963. \$6.95.

Arnold Rogow is seriously concerned about the impact of psychological disorder on politics and examines it through the career of James Forrestal, who began to go out of his mind in his last months as Secretary of Defense and committed suicide a short time after leaving his post.

Most of the book is devoted to a straight biographical description of Forrestal's life, with emphasis on his days in Washington as Navy Under Secretary, Navy Secretary, and Secretary of Defense. Here Rogow considers some of the significant political struggles of Forrestal's career and especially his role in establishing a Department of Defense. The focus of consideration is narrow—there is no attempt to discuss the wider implications of policy. Instead of analyzing the strategic role of our armed forces in 1947–9, he provides a blow-by-blow report on the organization of the Department of Defense. A sophisticated account of the context being omitted, we are not left any the wiser as to alternative possibilities in those years. And this is a pity, because if Rogow had given himself more leeway he could have made Forrestal the center of a book which would have placed these important years in some sort of historical framework and given us an important study of the origins of the cold war. It is, in general, one of the gravest weaknesses of psychological

biography that it tends to miss the public issues.

Nevertheless, Rogow's discussion of Forrestal's role does make a significant contribution. He shows that Forrestal was in a weak political position even before he became Secretary of Defense and that his influence on policy was not as profound as one might expect from the holder of such a high post. The main decisions were being made elsewhere. When he was Secretary of Defense, he was forced to defend a military budget much smaller than he thought necessary because President Truman wanted a small budget. Forrestal acted as a sort of frustrated and futile go-between for the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Neither side paid much attention to what *he* wanted; indeed, toward the end of his career he was literally snubbed by both sides. Those liberals and radicals who saw Forrestal as an *eminence grise* of the cold war were taken in by his public posture—which did not correspond to the reality of policy-making at the time.

But Rogow's work performs another service, and that is to make possible an evaluation of Forrestal as an anti-Communist crusader. Forrestal felt himself to be one of a select and little appreciated group who understood the Communist menace, in contrast to the great mass of slothful individuals

who were taken in by Communist promises. He was also deeply suspicious of disloyalty in government, and saw the hand of Communist intrigue everywhere. Nevertheless Rogow's book makes clear that Forrestal did have *some* sense of the rationality of balance-of-power politics, and that he did in fact operate to some degree on a rational plane of policy-making.

But his rational approach to power became dangerous because it was overlaid with the irrationality of "being tough with the Commies." Rogow makes only too clear the fanatic side of Forrestal and is thereby able to provide evidence for his argument that mental sickness in government officials is a danger to the rest of us. The danger comes not so much from an official going berserk and pushing The Button, but from a distorted sense of reality which may lead both to a series of policy decisions and a public ideology that literally misinterprets the situation which the nation faces. Rogow made the point thus:

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Forrestal's personality needs and policy recommendations were closely related. . . . Anxieties and insecurities, regardless of personal source, could become focused on Soviet behavior and be partially appeased by a stubborn insistence on a "tough" foreign and military policy.

In Rogow's book Forrestal becomes a case study of the problem posed by those who have made the cold war not into a classical conflict between two powerful states but into a stark confrontation of good and evil. The cold war satisfies the needs of those who must find an evil to fit their paranoid personalities. When they happen to be

in positions of power, they can "sell" this idea to the public because it is an idea easy to understand and because the public has so little recourse to other information. The cold war has a basis in fact; but it is also partly a myth, a belief that we must not yield because to yield is to be weak.

What is most disturbing about the problem Rogow presents so well is that "until the last few months of his life, Forrestal could impress almost everyone as a 'reasonable' man because it was 'reasonable,' in the context of the Cold War, to feel anxious, insecure, suspicious, and fearful, . . . to appear 'tough,' to warn against compromises and concessions, . . . to talk of 'forcing the issue' and the necessity of 'showdowns.'" It seems clear that Forrestal was only an extreme member of a group of policy-makers in Washington whose weakness expressed itself in toughness as a simple-minded answer to complex problems. It seems only too clear, too, that their need to be tough in front of an enemy also fitted—and fits—the needs of many Americans outside of government who respond with psychological relief to the demand that they be tough. (Rogow, it should be said, does not discuss the reverse problem of liberal and radical tender-mindedness; the foolishness of Henry Wallace at this time indicates that the reverse syndrome could also appear.)

The lesson of this book is that one should worry less about someone going berserk and pushing The Button than about trends of policy and their source in policy-makers who, because of psychological disability, are out of touch with reality. Rogow is correct when he asserts that the problem

should be made public and not hidden behind the assumption that policy-makers act according to a calculus of sanity. It is doubtful, however, whether his idea that they should be given psychological tests is a sufficient answer. A better answer is to train the public to recognize these people, a task which is not, after all, so very difficult. One of the men most likely to get the Republican presidential nomination literally shows all the traits of the Forrestal syndrome. Why are we being allowed by our press not to see him as he is, and not to understand that the danger he poses results not from any one policy idea he may have but from the very nature of his psychological needs? In part the answer is that the press lords in America are of the same ilk; in part because the press is stupid. Perhaps Rogow's consideration of the Forrestal case will at least open up some discussion of the problem. **WILLIAM J. NEWMAN**

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LETTERS

Independent Candidate

Editor:

Your readers will be interested in a most significant political contest in Massachusetts. Noel Day of Boston is Independent Candidate for U.S. Congress, 9th Congressional District. Mr. Day's Democratic opponent is John W. McCormack, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and next in line of succession to the Presidency. The Republican candidate is one of the leaders of the Gold-water movement in Massachusetts.

Noel Day is a nationally known civil rights leader and is particularly active in SNCC and NSM. He founded the first Freedom Schools for Negro and white school children in connection with the Boston school stayouts of June 1963 and February 1964. He is co-chairman of the Massachusetts Freedom Movement. A Dartmouth graduate and a trained social worker, he is Executive Director of St. Mark Social Center, a Roxbury settlement house.

Mr. Day articulates the centrality of peace to the achievement of a just and abundant social order. His campaign is explicitly connecting peace with the issues of racial justice and unemployment.

Financial contributions will be gratefully accepted. They should be sent to Canon James P. Breeden, Treasurer, Noel Day for Congress Committee, 41 Winthrop Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts.

CROSBY FORBES

Radical Youth

Editor:

We want to inform your readers about a critical new development in the American political scene—the emergence of an organization of students and young people who are seriously committed to building a new American left. Most of us have been hoping to see a revival of the

radical spirit in America—that spirit which in the past vigorously attacked entrenched interests, eagerly sought to organize at the grass roots, and offered a vision of a new society in opposition to the corrupting *status quo*. But while many “old timers” remained skeptical, a group of students has been working against the odds to try to help achieve this revival.

The group we are referring to is Students for a Democratic Society, an organization which is about to celebrate its second anniversary by inaugurating a major new program. Their plan aims at creating interracial movements in key Northern and border-state communities around such issues as jobs, housing, and schools. Their strategy, like the strategy of the Southern civil rights movement, is to have students and young people serve as catalysts of protest in these communities. Their hope is to see the emergence of grassroots political organization in many parts of the country capable of developing a program and a constituency independent of local political machines and the national Establishment.

The SDS program is ambitious. In addition to the community organizing effort, these students have published dozens of pamphlets and papers representing some of the best thinking now available on U.S. politics, economics, and cultural life. SDS has succeeded in attracting some of the best and angriest young minds now functioning, and has been able to put these minds to work in socially relevant ways. Moreover, SDS has had considerable success in reaching the American campus—its membership has doubled in the past few months, and it now has chapters on over 30 campuses, from Texas to Oregon to Boston. In recent months, at a half-dozen regional conferences organized by SDS, literally thousands of students have been confronted with the central facts and key debates about the American economy . . .

These young people are working at the most difficult task of stimulating protest and action in some of our country's most deprived and depressed areas. They are living at or below subsistence levels. They need you to join them with moral,

intellectual, and financial support. Won't you now write to them (Rm. 302, 119 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003), put yourself on their mailing list and send along whatever size check you can manage?

Sincerely,

W. H. Ferry, A. J. Muste, I. F. Stone

Objection

Editor:

Emanuel Geltman's review-essay in the Spring, 1964, issue of *DISSENT* contained some passing comments to my study of labor ideology. I say "passing comments" because it most certainly was not a *review* of the book. Furthermore what Geltman did write was so inaccurate as to suggest that he probably did not read the book.

In my preface to *The Rank-and-File Leader* I wrote that for "a period of nearly four years, I worked in a variety of industrial plants in the Milwaukee labor area." There followed a somewhat detailed account of my industrial work experience during the years 1953-57. Yet Geltman has written of me, "*summers* he worked in factories" and "praiseworthy as his *summer* employment was..." All Geltman needed to do was to open the book and read it to learn that *four years of continuous factory work was surely no "summer holiday."*

Geltman also said that I devoted entirely too much space to "tedious elaborations of methodology." The fact is that one chapter of 22 pages in a 400 page book is devoted to a discussion of the research method. That is standard procedure for any piece of social research. *One* of the important means for gathering the data was the novel use of a group discussion interview technique. To my knowledge, this particular technique, as developed by T. Adorno and others, had not been previously used or reported on in U.S. social research.

If Geltman had read the book it would be difficult to understand why he did not discuss what the book was about. It was not, as he implied, a study of the "stresses and strains on the shop steward." *It was a study of trade union mentality.* Specifi-

cally, the research was designed to test the Commons-Perlman job-consciousness theory of the American worker. Again, to my knowledge, this is one of the very few *empirical* critiques of the Commons-Perlman approach. The book reported the actual verbatim responses of what rank and file unionists believe and feel in relation to issues of corruption and delinquency, automation and discrimination, recession and war, politics and socialism. Nearly two hundred union stewards are involved in extensive sound-recorded group discussions on these sensitive social issues.

SIDNEY M. PECK

EMANUEL GELTMAN *replies*:

1. Mr. Peck is right, and I was in error, for which I offer my apologies. His preface does establish that he worked in a variety of plants for close to four years. In extenuation, I offer the admittedly weak excuse that, writing my passing comment a month or so after reading the book, I relied on my impression of the whole instead of checking the preface.

Having been guilty of error, I do not want to seem ungenerous in reply. However, I do not get the feeling from reading the book (and doing so a second time, which must surely be par for the course) that it makes any difference at all, and this is in fact the principal criticism I would make in a more extended comment. I do not find the work adequately communicative of four years (or four summers) of participation, observation, or inquiry. For that matter, barring a detail here or there, I do not see why a few students, working in tandem and armed with the technique, could not have polished off the study in a few intensive weeks.

2. As to methodology. Yes, there are 22 pages explicitly devoted to this. We cannot resolve this here, but it is precisely my complaint that the author himself does not realize how much the work is imbued with repeated demonstrations of method rather than with substantive clarification. Much of the professional literature suffers from the same ailment, born perhaps in dissertational require-

